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THE

TRUTHS

OF

RELIGION.

BY

JAMES DOUGLAS, Esq.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY PERKINS & MARVIN.
NEW YORK: JONATHAN LEAVITT.

1831.

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Printed by T. R. Marvin,.....Congress Street.

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

AMERICAN EDITION.

Mr. Douglas, the author of the following work, resides on his paternal estate, at Cavers, about forty miles from Edinburgh, Scotland. The extensive wealth which he inherits from his ancestors, is cheerfully expended in promoting those great objects of benevolence, which he has so eloquently illustrated and enforced by his writings. We were recently informed, by a gentleman from Scotland, that he supports, entirely from his own funds, several domestic missionaries, in the destitute places in his own country. As a testimonial of his interest in the well-being of the United States, he transmitted, not long since, through the hands of a friend, £25 to our more important benevolent societies.

Mr. Douglas, though a young man, has published several volumes, which indicate extensive powers of mind, and which are destined to exert a very beneficial influence.

His first work, which was republished in Boston, in 1823, was the "Hints on Missions." In the views

contained in this book, though confessedly imperfect, and though some of them are expressed in unguarded language, we find the germs of the rich fruits which have followed. He first describes the three periods of success which Christianity has enjoyed—the time of the apostles and their successors, the reformation, and the spreading of Christian colonies in America. He then states the principal causes of the want of success in the modern missionary efforts. Following that, is a sketch of the prospects which are opening on the friends of Christ, in regard to the further extension of Christianity, with an enumeration of the principal moral divisions of the earth. He closes with some general remarks on the "second reformation," which is now awaking the minds of men, and changing the very elements of society. "Like the temple of Solomon, it is rising silently, without the din of hammers, or the note of previous preparation; but notwithstanding, it will not be less complete in all its parts, nor less able to resist the injuries of time."

Not long after, the "Advancement of Society in Knowledge and Religion," appeared in Edinburgh. Our attention was first drawn to the work, by an excellent Review of it, in the Christian Spectator, written, as we have since understood, by the lamented Matthias Bruen, of New York. Three or four editions have appeared in Great Britain. It was not, however, till very recently, that the reading public in this country was favored with a reprint.

Seventy pages are devoted to a consideration of the past state of society, the early condition of mankind, the rise and fall of the great monarchies, the causes of

the slow progress in the movement of society, the removal of impediments, &c. The second part is devoted to a consideration of the new era of society which is commencing—the new powers which are beginning to operate—voluntary associations—scientific travellers—improved elements of science—the influence of a general literary and philanthropic society, &c. The third part is occupied with the consideration of religion at home—Jews and Christians—the subjects of district division, general correspondence, newspapers, reviews, schools, libraries, home missions, bible society. Religion abroad, is the subject of the fourth part. A brief view of the unevangelized world is given. England is considered to be the centre of evangelical action. Some excellent remarks follow, on the importance of system, economy, superintendence, native agency, education, English language, translations, colonies. The fifth part contains a general estimate of the tendencies of this age. A most animated description of the last and glorious triumphs of Christianity, concludes this able work.

Within a few months, a third volume has appeared, entitled, "Errors Regarding Religion," with a small Tract on the Importance of Prayer at the present time.* This is a philosophical and comprehensive classification of the various errors which have divided and disgraced the church. It gives the most comprehensive and lucid analysis of this subject, of any work within our knowledge. The author thinks that all important errors will soon vanish away, under the influence of the

* This Tract was originally published separately.

inductive philosophy, applied to the various branches of knowledge, the universal diffusion of the Scriptures, and the more abundant dispensation of the Holy Spirit. The "Thoughts on Prayer," are an earnest appeal to Christians to seek for the influence of the Spirit, as the one thing to be desired.

This work indicates very extensive research, and an unfettered style of thinking, together with admirable powers of generalization. Some will probably regard it as the most useful of all his publications.

The fourth work which Mr. Douglas has published, and which we now present to the reading community, is the "Truths of Religion." We think that it will be as useful and acceptable as its predecessors. Mr. Douglas has brought to the undertaking the same richness of illustration, and command of appropriate language, and comprehensiveness of view, which characterized his former works. The subject, indeed, does not admit of much variety. The Truths of Religion do not invite the unhallowed labors of the speculatist. It is not the field for mere taste and genius to cultivate. Nevertheless, every mind views the same topics in a different light from any other mind. Every passing year, too, is giving new force to the Evidences of Christianity, and multiplying the sources of apposite illustration, and clothing the whole subject in new forms of interest and beauty. We rejoice, and bless God, that such a mind as that of Mr. Douglas is deeply interested in the Christian religion. It would be narrowed and degraded by any other theme. Such an intellect is *at home* in the contemplations of God and of eternity. We are accustomed to speak of

mental philosophy as a profound and far-reaching science. But it is only an appendage of theological science, a portico to an august and imperishable fabric. Happy is that man to whom God has given, as he gave to Solomon, "a large understanding," accompanied with the love of spiritual and holy contemplations. He can revel on the riches of eternity. He can live by faith, in a higher sense than any other individual. He can rise to loftier and calmer regions. He can comprehend more of the glories of the celestial city. He can connect more intimately and satisfactorily the seemingly discordant and insulated events of a probationary state, with

> "——— the great eternal scheme,
> Involving all."

He can join with deeper and more emphatic delight in the sublime exclamation, "Whom have I in heaven but *Thee!*" We have often thought of the satisfaction and unknown ecstacy which such a mind as that of JOHN HOWE, or JONATHAN EDWARDS, enjoyed, when they first awaked in the Divine likeness. Their intellect was disenthralled. The great facts of revelation burst on their view in immeasurable extent and in ravishing sweetness. The ONE SYSTEM of the all-comprehending Mind was seen in something of its glory. They might perhaps behold the same harmony and order in the moral laws of a system of worlds, which Newton disclosed and demonstrated in a portion of these material heavens.

Whoever, therefore, enlarges our conceptions of Christianity; whoever, with the Bible as his guide,

gives us clearer and more extended views of "the unspeakable gift," is a benefactor to man of no ordinary kind. Such a benefactor, unquestionably, is Mr. Douglas. He is doubtless mistaken in regard to some of his positions. It would be easy to verify this remark in the present volume. Some of his sentences, very obviously, have more of the majesty of the Castilian tongue, than of the compact and embodied sense of the Laconian. A more perfect combination of critical and acute remark, of deductions derived from watching the operations of his own mind, with his powers of wide, general observation, in the external world, would doubtless enhance the value of his thoughts, as it has pre-eminently those of the author of the Natural History of Enthusiasm. Nevertheless, no diligent reader can fail to derive great profit from the perusal of the works of Mr. Douglas. They will raise him to the pure regions of an enlightened and thoroughly Christian philosophy. They will show him the utter comparative insignificance of all the distinctions that separate real Christians. They will breathe through his soul love to God and good will towards man. They will cement him in bonds of strong affection to all for whom Christ died. They will lead him to look forward with lively hope, to that grand consummation when the groans of suffering humanity shall be at an end, and when the Great Redeemer shall reign over the pure and happy millions of our race.

B. B. E.

Boston, April, 1831.

INTRODUCTION.

The principles of Morality and of Religion are few and simple. After all the systems and disputes of ethical philosophy, the great Teacher has comprised the essence of morality in one sentence, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In like manner, natural religion is summed up in, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." On these two commandments hang, not only the law and the prophets, but the religion, as far as reason can discover, of all intelligent natures, of angels as well as of men.

It is obvious that God, the source of all beauty and majesty, is the natural and rational object of our highest love and veneration; he bears a more intimate relation to each of his creatures than does all the rest of his creation put together. In him we live, and move, and have our being; and the breath we every moment receive from him is justly spent in his praise. Independent of positive rewards and punishments, it is our highest interest to serve him. His worship is its own reward. Contemplating and admiring his ways and works, the mind, in some measure, assumes the thoughts, and is changed into the likeness of that which it admires. The love of God alone truly reconciles us to the laws of God. By love we fulfil the law. Then the understanding joyfully traces the vestiges of Divine wisdom in all things, and in all

events; and the human will enters into the Divine will, and, by its cheerful acquiescence, makes the plans and purposes of the Godhead its own.

Such should be the mind of all intelligent creatures, but such is not the mind of man. Any theory which supposes human creatures actuated supremely by love to God and man, immediately places us in a world peopled by other beings, living in a golden age, whose history is the reverse of ours. It is, indeed, very possible that the holy angels possess this natural religion in its entire perfection; that, rising from the hand of their Creator in the full exercise of their powers, and unalterably formed in the image of God, their will has ever been in accordance with the Divine will, and love to God has ever been the principle, as well as the condition, of their glorious being. But man is placed in very different circumstances: he comes into the world ignorant and weak; even were his bias to the right, he cannot in childhood choose for himself. By the condition of his birth, he is placed at the disposal of others; and by the condition of his understanding, knowledge comes to his aid late, imperfect, and precarious; and his present state of moral probation is far different from that free and deliberate choice, which had the trees of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, placed clear and opposite to its view.

This anomaly in the state of man, presupposes a corresponding addition to the few and simple tenets of the creed of reason. A religion fitted for man, must not only rest upon the relation which every creature bears to the Creator, but must adapt itself to his feebleness and error, provide for the removal of his guilt, convince him of his sin and misery, and restore him to the love of God and to the Divine likeness. Thus the religion of reason, which regards merely the relation of God to his intelligent crea-

tures, must necessarily be modified, when it comes to include the more complex reference to sinful, weak, and dependent creatures; and hence natural religion, which is founded simply on the essential relation between the Creator and the creature, is totally inadequate to the necessities of our fallen race. A revelation adapted to man, while it includes in itself natural religion, must provide both an atonement or expiation for guilt, and also the means of changing and renovating our sinful nature. These two are necessary conditions of a revelation proposed to the guilty.

But man is not only guilty, but derives his guilt and his errors from those from whom he derives his life. The vices and the ignorance of mankind are hereditary, and national, as well as personal; and the characters of men depend in no small degree upon their parents and their country. No individual stands separate: his character is moulded by that of the generation in which he lives; that generation derives its color from the preceding ones, till we arrive at the fountain of all these moral impressions and changes, by ascending to the protoplasts and heads of the human race. This second anomaly in the human condition demands a second provision, in a revelation which provides for human nature such as it actually exists, and leads us to a new head of the renovated portion of our race—the Messiah—the Father of the everlasting age—and the Founder of a new moral world.

Hence religion consists, first, in the belief of our fall in Adam; secondly, of our new dependence on a Divine head, that we may cease from the creature, and trust to the Creator; thirdly, of a Divine expiation of our guilt; fourthly, of the method by which our guilt is removed; fifthly, of the process by which our will and our nature are changed into a similitude to the Divine; and, sixthly,

of the way in which this divinely renovated nature is elevated to the society of all God-like beings, and brought into the immediate presence and communion of the Father of spirits. In this brief enumeration are included all the leading truths of religion.

It is not necessary, in order to establish truth, to refute the errors that are opposed to it; but when it is shown from what source every error derives its origin, our belief is doubly fortified by the contemplation of truth, and by the discovery of error. It is therefore proposed, in a separate and subsequent work, to notice and classify, in the briefest manner, all the errors regarding religion. This, with the truths of religion, will complete the outline of the whole subject. Errors, though they appear infinite at first view, may be reduced to a few classes, and to a very few principles. Errors regarding religion, while they have their original cause in the dimness of the Divine image in the fallen mind, and the consequent obscurity of heavenly truth, may be traced, in their proximate causes, either to preconceived opinions, or to partial views. Thus the old errors of the ancient world, after the coming of our Saviour re-appeared in a Christian disguise, giving rise to as many heresies in religion as there had formerly been sects in philosophy; and the good seed of the word had almost been stifled by the indigenous weeds, which revived along with it in the mind, as they rushed up with all the strength and advantage which they derived from being the natural and previous occupants of the soil. More lately, in religion, as in philosophy, imperfect induction has been the stumbling-block, instead of preconceived theories; and a part of Divine truth, separated from its proper place, and exaggerated beyond its just dimensions, has been opposed to the whole.

Thus we complete the "intellectual globe," to use an

expression of Bacon, when we add the darkened to the enlightened hemisphere of thought.

Then our belief has its highest and perfect repose when we ascend to that point of view which discloses at once the foundations of truth, and the outlets of error, as the wanderings of the planets are explained away, and disappear with all their epicycles, and nothing remains but the immutable order of the heavens, when contemplated from their centre and point of rest.

THE

TRUTHS OF RELIGION.

PART I.

THE EVIDENCES OF RELIGION.

1. Tendency to Religious Belief. 2. Design everywhere. 3. A Future State. 4. The Facts of Religion Future. 5. Christianity the only Religion. 6. Christianity has its proofs on all sides. 7. External Evidence. 8. Evidence of Propheey. 9. Internal Evidence. 10. Miscellaneous Evidence. 11. Cumulative Proof. 12. Continually Augmenting Proof.

I. God has made all things in harmony and congruity. Truth for the mind, the mind for truth. It is not enough for the permanent and practical belief in a Deity, that there should be proofs of his existence,—these proofs must be fitted to the human faculties, and that belief must be adapted to the structure of the mind. Voltaire has observed, with reference to political utility, "Si Dieu n'existoit pas, il faudroit l'inventer;"* and Kant has (so far) justly maintained, that the notion of God is requisite to give unity and system to our principles. And so connatural to us is the belief of a Deity, and so interwoven with all our reasonings, that it forms the ultimate basis both of morality and knowledge. (A.)

* "If there was no God, it would be necessary to invent one."

Whatever reasoning we pursue, or whatever facts we observe, we must arrive at length at first principles, on which all reasoning must be founded. And these first principles are as much a revelation from God as Christianity itself, and as far removed from the possibility of our acquiring them by the exercise of our faculties as it would have been beyond our power to have lifted up the veil from futurity and invisibility, and to have beheld, by our own unaided reason, the scene of the future judgment, the throne set, and the books of destiny opened. All reasoning must be grounded on previous truths, which are known without reasoning, and in these fundamental truths we have the counterpart to the truths of Christianity, the former as necessary to the life that now is, as the latter to the immortal life which is to come.

If first truths are in a certain sense the voice of God within us, conscience still more loudly proclaims his jurisdiction even over our thoughts, and his intimate presence with our souls as their inspector now, and future judge. Every law implies a lawgiver, and conscience refers us to the supreme legislator, and brings us under the control of the moral order of the universe. But all our knowledge being referable to our first principles, and all our actions and thoughts being subject to conscience, every movement of the mind may lead us to our Author, in whom we not only live, and move, and have our being, but on whom all our thoughts depend as their foundation, and as their end.

Such is the original constitution of the mind, though its structure be now impaired, and its mechanism no longer retains its perfect action, but shows through all its movements the evident marks of irregularity and ruin. Still so great is the tendency to religious belief, that it presents the most distinctive as well as universal characteristic of man, nor is there any situation or state of out-

ward degradation which prevents the mind from breaking out beyond the bounds of inanimate nature, and finding or inventing an object immaterial like itself on which its hopes and fears may ultimately rest. Through all the variety of tribes and situations the same involuntary and unpremeditated reverence has appeared from some superior power; and the most obvious argument for the existence of a Deity that occurred to the ancients was the argument from general consent, from the admitted fact that a Deity was everywhere believed.

To this general belief there have no doubt been two classes of apparent exceptions,—the savage who has not yet formed an idea of divinity,—and the sophist who has rejected it. (B.) But the accounts of these savage atheists are given by travellers unacquainted with their language, too much in haste to examine any subject thoroughly, and who mistake the want of a name, or visible object of worship, for ignorance of a Deity. With respect to the atheism of philosophers, their unbelief arises not from the natural bias of the mind, but from a continual effort of the reasoning power, opposing the contradictions of their former creed to the natural tendency of their thoughts and current of their imaginations, so that the mind, kept divided and at war with itself, suspends its natural action.

The prevalence of atheism may be considered as a political presage;—it is symptomatic of the decay of states as well as of the corruption of individuals,—and of the dissolution of society as well as of morals. It broke out in Greece upon the eve of its loss of liberty; it re-appeared at Rome when the republic was in the wane; it revived in later times amid the corruption of Italy and the Papal Church, previous to the Reformation; and in France it accompanied the decline of the monarchy, and was the precursor of the revolution.

In examining the false religious creeds of the world, we

see, that the tendency to believe is strong even when the grounds on which belief rests are weak and irrational. While men act naturally, and follow their bias instinctively, their superstitions have a large sway over them, but when they begin to reason, they cease to believe. It is the mind which has gradually shaped out its own objects of worship, not a previously existing object which has commanded the veneration of the mind, and which, the more it is examined, exerts a deeper sway over its powers. Now, the less that there is of evidence in belief, the more strongly is exhibited the propensity of the mind to believe. The futility and absurdity of the various creeds which have prevailed throughout the earth are the strongest proofs that man was naturally created to fear God, and to have the thoughts of him continually present; and though now he shrinks from the purity of the Deity, still he must fill up the void occasioned by the absence of a true worship, by setting up idols monstrous, shadowy, and vain. The age of atheists and of skeptics, which undermines and destroys old idols, only prepares the way for new ones. Atheism and superstition alternate with each other, but atheism leads back the mind with much more rapidity to superstition than superstition does to atheism.

Thus the mind of man, if left to its own unaided efforts, as we may judge from its past history, would move round in perpetual circles, endeavoring to form one religious system after another, each of them in its turn destroyed by the fatal errors which it included. While atheism came between with its brief interval, like the transient sleep of the self-existent deity of Indian philosophy, during whose fits of slumber, all the gods and worlds are absorbed into the universal essence, only that the overflowing fountain of Deity may, after a pause, pour itself forth anew into all the diversified forms of Maya and delusion. Such is the disordered action of the human mind in its present and fallen

state, severed from that communion with the Deity on which was grounded its vigor and stability, yet enough remains of its original structure, to enable us to conclude that the mind was intended as a mirror to reflect the glory of its Author, and that, to fear God and keep his commandments, is indeed the whole duty of man.

II. As the traveller who wished for some relic of the old Roman greatness was desired to take up a handful of the dust on which he trode, and boldly to affirm that this was a remnant of ancient Rome; so he who gathers up a pebble or a flower, carries in his hand a demonstration of the Divine existence. Every portion of the universe is stamped with the impress of its Maker, but not always in characters equally legible by man. The dawn of design is visible even in the least organized of Nature's productions, but rises with ever increasing light through the ascending scale of creation. We find proofs from the simplest state of the elements, and the first rudiments of the world. The air would forever remain dead and stagnant round the globe, were it not for the law of expansion by heat, by which a current ascends from the equator, glides down upon the poles, and returns in cooling breezes to the burning climes of the south. And the earth would be without showers were it not for the law of *unequal* expansion by heat, according to which, currents of different temperatures are unable to retain their moisture when united, and the warmer air must restore a portion of its humidity to the form of vapour, and afterwards distil it upon the earth in rain. The ocean, though less mobile than the air, imitates it in the course of its currents, and equalizes the temperature of the different zones by the warmth of its great gulf stream, while it receives by the returning waters, the ice of the polar regions. To a law of unequal expansion in the air we owe the production of showers; and to an apparent irregularity of contraction in

the sea, as it cools towards the point of freezing, we owe the fluidity of the lowest ocean in high latitudes. To the minute portion of iron in the primitive rocks, and to the decomposition which it effects by its union with the oxygen of the atmosphere, we are indebted for the earliest soil; and to its being so minute, we are indebted for the fertility of that soil, which would have been altogether sterile had the proportion of iron been large. The marks of design, no less than the traces of organic remains, are found imbedded in the wreck of former worlds, each in succession being adapted to its place in the series; while the whole series are admirably fitted to be the forerunners of this present earth, and of man, its intelligent possessor, surrounded with the animals that minister to his wants, all of which subsist on the spoils of other continents, and the riches of ancient ruins.

Vegetable physiology is still very imperfectly understood, yet in the structure of plants, whether superficially regarded or more accurately examined, numberless instances of Divine skill are discoverable—in the germination, growth, and decay of vegetables,—in the manner in which they are located through the earth and adapted to their different situations,—in the nourishment they afford to the various tribes of animals—and in the various changes and improvements of which they are susceptible when cultivated by the hand of man. Man, in himself, contains an inexhaustible store of proofs of the Divine existence without the aid of anatomy, and merely regarding his outward form. What Divine skill in the position of his varied senses! What a proof of a Deity, as the ancient theists maintained, is even the structure of the human hand! How flexible the human tongue to form the almost inexhaustible sounds of articulate language! And how wonderful is the language of the countenance, which expresses, we know not well how, every varying shade of passion!

But the anatomy of the human body, and its interior structure is indeed the strong hold of natural theology, containing proofs of Divine workmanship such as no caviller can gainsay, while it is demonstrative, as soon as intelligible, to every understanding.

And when human anatomy has carried the proofs of Divine existence, as might be supposed, to the very highest pitch, comparative anatomy shows us what almost innumerable additions may be made to the sum of arguments, which, considered in themselves, seemed scarcely to admit of additions. And though this evidence gradually diminishes in strength and variety as it is prolonged down to the inferior animals, what a sudden and unexpected manifestation of Divine skill breaks in upon us like a new revelation, from the study of insects, among whose multitudes of tribes, we meet with forms and structures as varied and unexpected as if they had been the tenants of another planet.

"Wherever I turn my eyes," said Aurenzebe, when conscience-stricken at the point of death, "I see nothing but the Divinity." And so might an observer of nature exclaim, were his eyes opened to discern the every day wonders which are around him. Like Moses beholding the burning bush unconsumed, wherever we go, we might tread with reverence, for our footsteps are upon holy ground. And while this earth is a magazine of evidences for the Divine being, astronomy, which connects this earth with the solar system, and with the host of stars (impressed as they are with the same mighty movement, and obedient to one universal law) spreads these proofs and evidences beyond the limits of our nether world, and diffuses them over the heavens.

Thus to an intelligence capable of understanding it, the world would be a vast system of hieroglyphics, which, to the eye, represented every variety of form and of life, and

which, to the mind, were the symbols of the being of the one, true, and ever-living God. But our ignorance spreads a thick veil over the meaning of these sacred characters, which is only slowly and partially raised, by the gradual progress of discovery.

Design, though it affords the most obvious as well as the most numerous series of proofs, does not stand alone, there are other lines of argument which lead to the same conclusion, with equal, if not superior certainty, but which, as requiring a higher exercise of the intellect, are both more exposed to mistakes, and more remote from ordinary use. (C.) All things, if rightly pursued, lead to God. Our own fleeting thoughts conduct us to the primitive and original mind. Consciousness—to Him who knows us better than we do ourselves. Conscience—to the supreme Judge. Every dependent and derived being—to absolute existence. Change—to immutability. Space—into immensity; and time—into eternity.

But these topics belong more properly to the Philosophy of Mind.

There are two conclusions, however, which ought never to be overlooked.

Design not only proves a designer, but manifests that the Divine Intelligence has chosen that medium of proof that was adapted to the human faculties; it shows not only that mind everywhere exists, but that the Divine mind calls upon our minds to be attentive to its existence. That the world is a collection of contrivances, not because infinite power has need of shifts to accomplish its purposes, but because infinity has brought itself down to the understanding of man, in order that man might be an intelligent spectator, and imitator of the operations of God. How immense a gulf has the Divine Architect crossed to make his fabric intelligible to man!

Again, the discovery of God in his works is gradual.

Most of these proofs of design not being obvious at first view escaped the notice of the earlier ages of men. The belief of the Gentiles rested less upon argument than in personification; wherever there was motion, according to them there was life, they perceived animation in the world, but failed to trace design, peopled the earth with a number of living forces, while they overlooked the controller of the whole. To the earliest shepherds, the heavens declared the glory of God, and though the early philosophers widely misinterpreted their movements, the firmament still displayed the handywork of her first and intelligent mover. His eternal power and Godhead were forcibly shown by the general arrangement of the universe, which perhaps even then, struck the imagination fully more than it does at present. Now in a deeper language it addresses the understanding, and adduces to it a multitude of proofs in a series which has no term but in the limitation of our faculties. It is also manifest that though the Deity is always discoverable by the fabric of the universe, as St. Paul has observed, yet that the evidence for the Divine existence is gradual in its growth, augmenting with the lapse of time, and likely to accumulate to a still greater mass of proof throughout the succession of unborn generations.

And thus it may be proved that the proceeding of the Deity in revealing himself to the sons of men is analogous to all the other processes of the Divine government—that they are all marked by a progressive tendency, and a gradual developement. The law of continuity holds both in nature and in grace, and hence the high probability *à priori*, that if any revelation be vouchsafed from above to man, that its discoveries will be partial before they become universal, and that its light will be like that of the morning, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

III. The two points which natural religion establishes are, the existence of a Deity, and the existence of a soul

after death. The belief of both of these is lost in its origin amid remote antiquity; and is stronger in both cases than the evidence which could easily be produced, would warrant, amongst nations who possess no sacred writings. This proceeds partly from tradition, which contributes a large share to most creeds. All nations point to the past as the source of their religious opinions, and preserve amid the relics of antiquity, some documents of a previous communication with heaven. Partly also from the aptitude of the soul to believe in both these tenets; being originally created for their reception, so that when reason fails in its office of furnishing evidence for them, the other powers of the mind step in, and supply its lack of service.

Nothing can be more adverse to the hope of a future life than the appearance of the body at death, yet notwithstanding this opposition of the evidence of the senses, there has been a common and prevailing consent that the soul is immortal; and doubtless whatever evidence might be brought for the existence of this visible world after we cease to see it, still stronger might be brought for our existence after this world has ceased to be visible to us. Whatever is simple, is to the mind eternal; there is no creation nor annihilation properly speaking, discoverable by those unenlightened by revelation; and all the movements of the world are conducted with apparent change, but with real permanence. It would be saying little to affirm that our souls are as simple in their texture as the elements of our body which will enter into new combinations when we are separated from it, and that our consciousness will be as inherent in us, as their tendency to new affinities in them, for consciousness, which indicates an indivisibility in the mind not possessed even by the atoms of matter, is an argument much stronger for the immortality of the soul than any that can be adduced for the continuance of the material world. Thus the mind

knowing its own existence by consciousness, and consciousness implying individuality, a conviction of the soul's simplicity and consequent immortality, is pressed upon all men dimly, and scarcely perhaps conceived in a regular proposition ; but determinately, and convincingly upon all who thought with power on the subject of morals and religion, such as Socrates and Plato, and the more profound philosophers of antiquity.

But there is a higher source of conviction open to all. Still more imperatively than consciousness, does conscience, (which is the consciousness of our consciousness—which reflects a second time the operations of our mind while it passes a moral judgment upon them, and is the very heart and centre of our being,) lead us on to an unseen state of existence, and presenting to us the Creator of the world as the judge of his moral creatures, brings us into new communication with the Being of all beings, the former of our intellectual frame, and forces upon us not only the belief of an existence after death, but of a state of rewards and punishments apportioned to each by Omniscience, and thus necessarily impresses us with the invisible world as an immortal state of retribution. For the dictates of conscience, though generally acknowledged to be divine, are not fully realized and sanctioned on this side of the grave, and the remorse which it awakens is not lessened by the lapse of time, but rather increases by reflection, and thus involves in itself the notion of eternity. (D.)

And corresponding to the future distribution of positive reward and punishment, the law by which appetites and actions are strengthened into craving wants and inveterate habits, and by which character continues to be formed till the last pulse of this mortal life, discovers a preparation within ourselves for happiness or misery which are awaiting us pure and unmitigated in a future world.

IV. The immortality of the soul, thus doubly evidenced by consciousness and conscience, and the existence of a Deity proved not only by abstract reasoning, but by a manifest design through creation ; an immense importance is given to the two inquiries so closely connected with each other, in what relation does man at present stand to his Maker, and what is the condition of his existence after death ? But the light thrown upon the soul's immortality, and upon the existence of the Deity, only increases the darkness in which we are left with regard to his purposes towards us. The contrivances so visible in the human body, mark the end for which they were intended, but the human soul is less obviously destined to a particular end. There are anomalies connected with it which cannot be solved. Though fitted in some degree for the present state, its powers are far above its present condition, and point to a future world where its energies may be unfolded, and where its destiny shall correspond to its disposition. That God exists, is certain ; that he is merciful, is probable, for the light of nature fades away as it proceeds from the Divine existence, to the proof of the Divine attributes,—and the conscience obeys the Divine command, and says to the righteous it shall be well with him ; and to the wicked, it shall be ill with him,—yet the mixture of evil and good is so great, that there is some rule beyond the reach of humanity, which is required to pronounce sentence in these mixed cases, and not in extreme instances which never occur.

There is thus always a trembling hope of escape from punishment when we regard the Divine mercy, and always " a certain fearful looking for of judgment," when we contemplate the Divine justice ; and nature tries in vain to disperse the thick darkness that settles round the judgment-seat of the Almighty. Whatever terminates on this side of the grave can be viewed as a whole, and the adaptation

of its parts to each other may be discerned and pointed out, but the plan of God's moral government stretches too far into futurity and invisibility for reason to form even a slight outline of it, and there is much that tends to perplex amid the notices with which we are surrounded respecting our origin and end. We are made acquainted with our Creator, but not with his will and his intentions; we learn our immortality, but not its nature and occupations. We are warned of future judgment, but not of the rule by which we shall be tried; in vain should we search through all nature for facts upon which to build a perfect scheme of natural religion. These facts are still future; they will be learned by experience at the day of final retribution, but that experience will come too late. There is no similarly situated race of beings placed within our knowledge, from whose history we might learn what is to befal ourselves.

It is only from a disclosure of the Divine mind that we can obtain the knowledge of which we stand in need, and it requires revelation to lift up the veil, and present the future and the invisible to the mind. A single sentence inspired by God is of more avail than the conjectures of the highest understandings for thousands of years; and the pre-intimations of conscience, though vague and uncertain, as referring to an unknown Judge and Tribunal, assume shape and certainty from revelation. Hence no system of natural theology has ever prevailed, or ever been practised entirely separated from revelation, either real or pretended. Men have never thought of reasoning out a religion solely by the strength of their own faculties; the theists of antiquity appealed to tradition; and the world in general, receiving with small interest the conjectures of philosophy and the researches of reason, but listening with credulous respect to every pretender to revelation, have always looked to some system which was

supposed to be of Divine origin, well knowing that it was from God alone that they could expect light in the midst of their palpable darkness.

V. It was an objection frequently brought forward by infidels, that amid so many pretences to revelation, it was difficult to discover the true one. But the contrary is the fact. Christianity, without offering any one of its innumerable proofs, might be shown to be true by the method of exhaustion. It is proved that God exists; and that he calls upon man to be attentive to his existence; that this call has reference not merely to the present state, but far more to the unseen world, where the soul shall live for ever in the more manifest presence of his Creator. But though the knowledge of God and of immortality be of all others the most important and imperative, yet it is the subject on which nature and reason furnish us with the fewest data, applicable to our actual condition. It might be shown at length, that though the largest and most powerful minds of the human race have exhausted themselves on this subject, they have come to no stable conclusion, but have added the utmost perplexity to our previous uncertainty, and that the philosophy of Greece, unable to discover a true principle, and inextricably involved in a false one, strove in vain to disentangle itself from the meshes which itself had woven, and left religion in a more deplorable state than it had found it. Again, it might be shown that if reason had done little for mankind; excepting Christianity, all professed revelations had done still less; that they rested upon no evidence whatever, and that far from distracting the attention, they could not bring forward any claim to the consideration of reason. That all the ancient religions had their beginning concealed in the darkness of antiquity; that their votaries founded their belief solely on the previous belief of others. That far from resting on any argument, they included in

themselves the history of their origin, and could be traced without difficulty to the workings of imagination, gradually shaping out a visionary world, and adding the reveries of one generation to those of another. Farther, that the religions of Boudh and of Zoroaster, though of later origin, could not designate and ascertain their founders; and that Mohammedanism, which was borrowed entirely, in its leading doctrines, from the Jews, was ignorant of the sacred books of which it professed itself to be a supplement, and that Mohammed had no other pretensions to inspiration, for arguments they cannot be called, than the beauty of his style, and the sharpness of his sword.

Hence Christianity is without a rival, and the often reiterated infidel objection, from the number of conflicting religions in the world, comes to nothing. It is not here as among the shields of Numa, where that which was said to be derived from heaven was undistinguishable from those which were fabricated upon earth. Christianity alone is founded upon argument, it is the only rest for the mind, which alone can dispel its darkness, quiet its fears, and satisfy its longings, nor is there any choice between it, and the most absolute skepticism. All other creeds but the Koran, rest merely upon their antiquity; and the Koran, upon the purity of its Arabic, and the victories of its champions.

Nor is modern infidelity better furnished with rival claims to Christianity. The ancients had their systems of philosophy however erroneous, and the old religions had their discoveries of futurity however visionary, but the skepticism of our days has neither system nor discovery; it is too feeble to be prolific even in error, and has too little of imagination to be visionary; its whole being consists in negation. What single tenet could the whole host of the infidel writers be brought to maintain?—their only aim is to destroy. But skepticism itself is not a permanent

state of mind; it can only be preserved by immersing the soul in sensual pursuits, and leaving inert its higher powers, or, by keeping it in perpetual agitation, blunting its perception of the force of evidence, and directing its attention unceasingly to the dark and doubtful side of things. Skepticism too is a state not only uneasy but unsafe; allowing to it the utmost which it claims, it cannot prove Christianity untrue: its doubts and its difficulties may all exist, as other difficulties do, while the facts to which they are opposed exist likewise, in all their reality, and with all the danger with which they are invested; and a deeper view into the nature of things might cause the unbeliever to regard his doubts with as much wonder and contempt as we look back upon the errors and difficulties of earlier ages; those morning clouds of the human mind which a single breath was able to disperse.

VI. As into whatever part of nature we look, we find arguments for the existence of a Deity, arguments ever multiplying in proportion as they are closely examined; so on all sides we are furnished with accumulating proofs for Christianity; from nature and from miracles, from history and from futurity, from the perfections of God, and from the mind of man. For every truth is in relation with all other truths, and the more widely and minutely all and each are examined, the more numerous are the arguments which present themselves; and it is the limitation of our faculties, not the limitation of the subject, which closes any series of reasoning.

To a mind so vast as to take in a large field of intellectual vision, undazzled, and untroubled with the extent of the view, it would matter little in what order those stores of evidence were spread out before it; but with the weak and narrow mind of man, increase of evidence does not always produce increase of conviction. The mental eye is confused by the multiplicity of proof, and is apt to

attribute that confusion not to itself, but to the evidence which is laid before it. Hence evidence is often strengthened by judicious omission; and a happier arrangement of facts, without any additional proof being afforded, will strengthen conviction to a wonderful degree. Hence the merit of the immortal work of Paley.

> ———Tantum series juncturaque pollet;
> Tantum de medio sumtis accedit honoris!

The Evidences of Christianity are, for the sake of distinctness, properly and naturally divided into the external, the prophetical, and the internal; while the internal again, owing to their multiplicity and variety, may be subdivided into those which are strictly called internal, and those which may be termed miscellaneous. It has been the unhappy mistake of many defenders of Christianity, to depreciate some of these divisions of evidence, in order to exalt that kind of which they themselves were treating; but there is, in reality, no opposition among them; while each is peculiarly fitted for its intended purpose, they all reflect mutual light, and unite with a perfect harmony. The external evidence is adapted to meet the case of unbelievers; the prophetic evidences, to such as have some acquaintance with the Scriptures; and the internal evidences are adapted to every conscientious inquirer who is earnest in his search after the way of life.

This division, and this adaptation, are pointed out by the Author of the Christian religion himself, when he declared, in general, "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me;" and to the Jews, to whom the oracles of God were committed, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me;" and, for the encouragement of conscientious inquirers, "If any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

Not only have these different sources of proofs an entire concurrence among themselves, but they bear a general analogy to the arguments on which natural religion is grounded.

Every change in the phenomena of nature is an argument for the existence of God; for every change, by the constitution of our minds, forces upon us the belief of a cause, and leads us up, through all changes and all causes, to the Being who is unchangeable and eternal. In like manner, every change in the order of the phenomena of nature, or, in other words, every miracle, leads us immediately to the Lawgiver of nature, since he alone, who gave the law, has the power of suspending it. Hence the demand for miracles on the one side, and the pretension to miracles on the other, whenever a new religion is proposed. Any addition which is made to the light of nature requires an evidence that it comes from the Author of nature, who has its laws at his disposal, and can order the course of events according to his will. And so far from miracles being incredible, they naturally follow the supposition of the Divine Ruler intimating his will in a direct manner to his intelligent creatures. This is admitted in the words of Jesus, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin."

From the infinity of space and time, or, more properly, from their indefiniteness, stretching beyond any bounds that the mind of man can assign to them, and seeming, as far as they are conceived, to reject any limitation, we have an image of eternity and ubiquity presented to us, which render easier our conception of Jehovah; of him who is existence in himself in all its fulness; of him who comprehends space, and who fills eternity. In the Bible we have the reverse of this process, by which we ascend from time to eternity: here, it is eternity condescending to time; and he who is from everlasting to everlasting, making his

perpetual designs intelligible to the children of a day. Hence arises the argument from prophecy. If God be viewed as ruling over the affairs of men, and ordering the intelligent as well as the unintelligent portion of nature, we expect equal marks that he is the Divine Author of revelation from his providence, as we find in the miracles from his power: and in prophecy we find them. Revelation, like all the other operations of God, and in order that it be analogous to his whole proceedings, must be gradual; and prophecy is fitted to this gradual development of the Divine mind. Connecting the first dawnings of the Divine plan with its full disclosure and ultimate accomplishment, it prevents any break in the history and community of believers. He who intelligently receives the first communications, can have no scruple in receiving the later additions, seeing that, by means of prophecy, these recognize each other, and fit in together as portions of the same eternal plan.

Again, all bodies that consist of parts, and almost all bodies that are compounded, lead us to an outward influence which united these parts together. And thus, beyond the complexity of visible objects, we are led to the power which makes this various universe a whole, and who is himself absolutely simple and universal. And in the Bible we are similarly furnished with the key which not only reduces all the varieties of God's moral dealings towards mankind to a few principles, and reconciles them to one harmonious system, but which also unites the moral to the material world, and, showing that they present the same difficulties, raises a proof, even from objections, that both worlds are stamped with the peculiar impress of the same creative and original mind. Hence arises the internal evidence of analogy. While conscience gives a moral unity to the religion of nature and of revelation, and recognizing the character of her Author in the thrice holy

Jehovah, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, identifies the still small voice within us with the voice of Him who now speaks from heaven, and who, as the moral governor of the world, must give the highest and most solemn sanction to his own laws, though men, for very obvious reasons, are inclined to undervalue their imperativeness, and to mitigate their penalties and their terrors.

Each of these divisions of evidence bears witness to the attributes of its Author. The external evidence of miracles is stamped with His infinite power; the prophetic, with His divine prescience; and the internal, with His perfect holiness.

VII. Mankind are so constituted, that an individual can do little, but that the species can do much. The aids and resources which we possess are the slow accumulation of generation after generation, and of nations after nations. Our knowledge is in general the acquisition of others, and what the most original mind invents for itself, bears but a very small proportion to what it has inherited from its predecessors.

Each individual is thus placed at the mercy of the veracity of mankind, and mankind are truthful, whenever they have the means of being so, and whenever they have no motive for the contrary.

At first view there would seem to be a great mass of error prevalent in the world, both with respect to facts, and to opinions; and so in some sense there really is; but when compared to the quantity of true facts, and correct opinions, the mass of errror is but small; and even of that mass, the larger part consists of partial truths, or of facts partially detailed.

Conflicting errors are but a number of varying side views of the truth, which the truth, when steadily viewed, accounts for and reconciles; and erroneous narrations, like the discrepancy of witnesses on a trial, unite together,

and form a body of evidence, when their imperfections and partialities have due allowance made for them, and when the points in which they agree are fitted in together.

Thus truth is the rule, and falsehood the exception; and belief is the tendency, and disbelief the exception; each of the exceptions requiring a sufficient cause. And thus, though credulity, which believes to avoid the trouble of examination, is perpetually deceived; belief, which yields to evidence, and which is strong in proportion to the strength of evidence, is very rarely misled.

And it is needful that it should be so, for the unjust live by faith as well as the just, and the knowledge of the philosopher depends upon testimony as well as the information which is necessary to the most ignorant of our kind. Testimony and trust, are the supports of social life; remove them, and the nations would become like the dust of the desert, without any principle of coherence, and the savage and unsocial state of infidel writers would be no longer a dream. Covenants would at once be annulled; the laws would lose their authority; history would become silent; the past be barren of instruction, and speech no longer convey thoughts from mind to mind.

It is on the principle of belief in testimony that the external evidence for Christianity rests, and as it is a principle in every day use, even the most ignorant are practised judges of it. But the evidence for the miraculous facts on which Christianity is founded, depend upon more powerful and explicit evidence, than can be adduced for any other facts whatsoever. It rests not upon the testimony of an indiscriminate and unknown multitude, but principally on that of the twelve apostles, previously chosen to be the companions and witnesses of Christ's miracles and sufferings, and who, both from the nature of the case, and from the intimations which were given them, were designated beforehand as martyrs—witnesses who were to

seal their evidence with their blood.———the seventy disciples were also witnesses, though not exactly of the same order.———after them were the five hundred who had seen the Lord Jesus after his resurrection. And still further, the whole Jewish nation, who were witnesses of miracles they rejected, but which they never succeeded in disproving.

But the evidence of the apostles alone, is incomparably the highest degree of testimony which is anywhere to be met with, from the impossibility of their being deceived, and from the impossibility of their having any motive to deceive others.

Their direct evidence, great as it is, is rendered still greater by the defection of one of their number, Judas. Had there been anything capable of detection, he was the person to detect it. He had surveyed all the miracles with the eye of a companion and a traitor. And in the negative to every doubt and suspicion which his silence affords, we have the testimony of the remaining eleven placed in the strongest point of view.

In the case of the apostle Paul we have an unexpected addition even to this, the case is here reversed, an enemy becomes a friend, and by avowedly miraculous means.

These thirteen thus appear, by the circumstances in which they were placed, to have carried the force of testimony to the very highest pitch which it is possible to reach.

The fact of the Resurrection of Christ rests upon a weight of evidence so great, that the rejection of it would be equivalent to the adoption of universal skepticism; the witnesses for it, as we have seen, were publicly designated; they had full opportunity of information; their character and conduct was at all times canvassed; they could not be deceived themselves; they had neither motive nor opportunity to deceive others. If, according to Mr.

Hume's remark, we are to believe the lesser miracle in preference to the greater, (E.) then most assuredly we must believe the truth of Christianity. It is less contrary to nature that the dead should be raised, than that the apostles should have acted as they did, had their testimony been false. The resurrection of a dead man, is but a single "violation of the laws of nature;" the persisting of twelve men in giving their testimony to a falsehood, without a motive, and against every motive; not upon one occasion, but upon all occasions; would be a repetition of miracles, and of miracles too without any possible cause. That God should raise the dead, would be an over-ruling of nature, but that, by his providence, at least, if not his miraculous interposition, he should connive at, and seem to favor the most artful falsehood and delusion that ever was spread, would be not only a violation of nature, but of the Divine character itself.

He who disbelieves Christianity, therefore, if he were consistent, must disbelieve Divine providence, and must reject all testimony. He can have no other information but what he collects from the notice of his senses, and would be reduced to the condition of a solitary savage. But there are no consistent opposers of Christianity, otherwise their opposition would be little formidable.

The simplest form of the external evidence for Christianity, then, is this: the Apostles, in their peculiar circumstances, could not be deceived, and could have no motive to deceive others; this is exemplified, in some degree, by almost any view, however slight, of the history of the New Testament which may be casually taken.

The argument may be but feeble in its impression at first view, but is capable of continual augmentation, in proportion to the researches and information of the inquirer. It is a proof which may be shaped into a vast variety of forms, and which may proceed upon different

lines of argument. The works that have been written upon this subject would of themselves form no inconsiderable library; but there are two works, "Paley's Evidences," and his "Horæ Paulinæ," which alone are calculated, without reference to others, to exhibit a body of proof which can never be gainsayed.

They have no weak nor vulnerable point about them; no answer deserving a name has been given to them; and, from the silence with which they have been received by infidel writers of any note, we may infer their hopelessness as to the attempt.

Yet Paley's chief merit in these works consists in omissions, and in a lucid arrangement of facts; most of what he has said had been said before, but he has freed it from all questionable matter, and has brought the subject to a direct conclusion, on the obvious principles of practical sense. Thus though the works of Paley represent the strength of the external evidence, they by no means give an adequate character of its fullness; other and independent sources of proof are adduced in other writings; and every new author upon the subject, however little original in other respects, contributes some slight addition to the mass of probabilities: so copious are the materials, that they present themselves even to those who are scarcely seeking for them. (F.)

VIII. In prophecy we have an ever-growing proof of the truth of Christianity, and of its proceeding from the same mind which governs the world. If presented in its genuine form, it would give as well as receive a commentary from all the greater changes which form the hinges and ultimate principles of history, and would prove the connecting link between God's dealings with the world at large, and the more intimate relations which he bears towards his church.

But prophecy has been too often darkened by those

who sought to explain it, and the comment has frequently effaced the meaning of the text. "My thoughts are not as your thoughts," has been amply illustrated by many of the expositors of the prophetic writings; and the intellect which comprehends but the events of a single life, has been thus placed in contrast with the mind which embraces eternity, and which governs all worlds.

The genius of prophecy has been well illustrated by the admirable Lowth, and some of its principles have been strongly established by Warburton and Hurd; but no standard work has ever appeared which has truly imbibed the spirit of the prophetic scriptures, and which united a large view of history to a discernment of the method of Providence in the ruling of human affairs. Yet, though the evidence of prophecy has thus had its force greatly blunted, and even rendered doubtful and suspicious, by the wild conjectures which have been thrust into works professing to elucidate the sacred writings, still prophecy remains a strong and sufficient witness to the Divine origin of our religion.

Those commentaries are in general the best which have the fewest pretensions; and Bishop Newton's view presents the arguments from prophecy with considerable force, though occasionally disfigured with weak remarks and common-place quotations.

A standard work upon prophecy would require still higher powers than a similar work on the external evidences of Christianity; but, had the sound judgment of Paley been exercised in rejecting whatever was visionary and ill-supported in prophetic interpretation, we should have perceived, that, though the method of prophecy is vast and comprehending, yet that its fulfilment is clear, certain, and demonstrative.

The evidence from prophecy does not consist in the fulfilment of a single prediction, but in the accomplishment

of a series of predictions which embrace the history of the world, not indeed in its minute details, but in its leading outlines, from its first commencement to its final termination. The merely indicating many of these prophecies is sufficient to mark their fulfilment.

The Seed of the woman has bruised the head of the serpent, and the serpent has bruised his Conqueror's heel, whether it respects the general warfare between the better cause and the worse, or whether it more specially refers to the Messiah's triumph over sin and the evil one. The descendants of Japhet have obtained the empire of the world. The unity of the Godhead has been everywhere spread by the sons of Shem. The offspring of Ham still recruit the perishing race of slaves ; and Egypt, eminently the land of Ham, has fulfilled a series of prophecies, in being, ever since the Persian conquest, " a base kingdom," governed by strangers, and finally with slaves for its rulers. The hand of the Ishmaelites is still against every man, whether in his native sands of Arabia, transplanted to the hills of Korassin by the victories of the caliphs, or to the recesses of the African Sahara. The kingdoms that vexed Israel are utterly destroyed, and their destroyers have also perished. The ruins of Nineveh are unknown, and those of Babylon disputed. A star has arisen out of Jacob, and the Shiloh has founded a spiritual empire, which still exists, and is extending, while the Macedonian and Roman sovereignties of Chittim and the isles have perished for ever. The four empires have terminated, and the ten kingdoms are on the wane, while the Euphrates is drying up, and the way of the kings of the east is opening. All things are preparing for the final struggle ; the world is mustering for its last battle ; and the saints of the Most High are expecting the dominion, and waiting for a kingdom which shall crush all other empires into powder as small as the dust of the summer threshing-floor,

and which itself shall give place to no other sway, but shall endure for ever and ever.

IX. The internal evidence, as stretching over a wide field, and embracing a vast variety of particulars, we have remarked, may be divided into the internal evidence and the miscellaneous.

The evidences strictly termed internal, might again be divided into, first, The evidence resulting from the analogy between nature and revealed religion; secondly, From the adaptation of revealed religion to the mind of man; and, thirdly, From the harmony revealed in the exercise of the Divine attributes throughout the Scriptures.

It was a wonderful accession to the strength of the Christian cause, when Bishop Butler turned the weapons of unbelievers against themselves, and showed by such an indissoluble chain of reasoning, that all the objections brought forward against Christianity, were equally valid against the course of nature; that both were liable to the same difficulties, and that the same principles were operating in both. Thus the principle of undesigned coincidence, so admirably applied by Paley to prove the Epistles of St. Paul genuine, may be applied to prove Revelation the genuine work of the Author of nature; since the coincidences in nature and Revelation, were undoubtedly not designed by the sacred writers, presenting as they did, for seventeen centuries, till the time of Bishop Butler, difficulties and not corroborations. And thus, while the principles of Christianity are not fully exemplified in this state, but have their ultimate results in a future life, it gives us the additional evidence of sense to that of faith, to perceive these very principles at work in nature, and to have them obvious to our senses, and present and operative in this world's affairs.

One of the most remarkable of these principles, alike discoverable in nature and revelation, has been so little

attended to, that it requires almost a term to express it. It may be called the Longanimity, "μακροθυμια" of the Deity, with whom time is as nothing, while he beholds things from the centre of his ever-present eternity. The more we contemplate the world, the longer are the tracts of time we perceive to have been consumed in preparing this earth for the abode of man. And when prepared, the seeds of the Divine counsels germinate but slowly, appear often nipped in the bud, and are ages after ages reaching maturity. The tendency of events is to good —to knowledge—to virtue, and to happiness. But it is a tendency that is continually checked, and which, at the best, has no great rapidity in developing itself, though buoyant under opposition, and often turning the obstacles it meets with into props for its further progress. The proceedings of Divine grace are wonderfully analogous to the slow unfoldings of Divine providence, and the progress of religion is liable to the same delays, and consequently to the same objections. Connected with the same principles are the partial developments both of providence and grace, by which the blessings God bestows in either, are not only late but local; produced frequently in a remote territory, as well as in a distant age. And again, in this identity of nature and grace, an objection is converted into an argument.

Other coincidences between nature and revelation may be remarked at one time, in the smallness of the means and the greatness of the results, at another time in the greatness of the preparation and the smallness of the result. Instances of the first abound throughout the whole of nature, and are frequent and obvious in every part of Scripture.

The second is exemplified in the immense profusion of seeds which have no room to germinate, the tendency of population to overstep the limits of the supply of food,

and its continual thinnings by famine, disease, and war. Also in the checks which the advancement of society receives, and in the principles of decay inherent to all bodies of men, by which even the most flourishing states are limited in their attempts at improvement, and have their career cut short within narrow limits. Similar laws and principles limit religious reformations and revivals; success by cherishing the seeds of disunion and decay sets bounds to itself; the performance never comes up to the promise, and the morning is brighter than the day which succeeds it. Thus all the flourishing periods of the Church have given rise to hopes which have never yet been realized; and transitory as they were, and putting forth blossoms of which so small a part fixed to fruit, they are rather anticipations of some future period of prosperity, than possessed of any endurance and stability in themselves.

These are but samples of the coincidence between nature and revelation, for whatever principles are found operative in the government of nature, will be seen to recur in the dispensations of God's grace, and the more the Bible and nature are examined, the more will the style of the same Divine Artist be perceived in both. Though the subjects be different, and therefore the appearance also, at first view, be dissimilar, yet the character that pervades them throughout, is that of the same Eternal mind.

In the second place, with respect to the adaptation of Christianity to the mind, the instances are too numerous even to be classed. So completely do they fit in together as to leave no room for doubt that they are the workmanship of the same hand, and designed in their original structure, the one for the other. Wherever there is a want or a desire in the soul, a supply and a satisfaction is afforded for it in revelation.

True knowledge consists in knowing God, who is the

root of all existence, and from whose will all else takes its color and determination. Conformity to that will is the only happiness; whatever thwarts or opposes it must be crushed in the opposition. To know that will as far as it regards ourselves is the necessary beginning of wisdom, without which we can neither know, nor do any thing to purpose. Christianity makes that will evident, even with regard to all the details of life, and removes the darkness from every part of the path of duty.

But again, though we may know the Divine will, we may want the power, or the inclination to follow it. Christianity supplies both, it holds out a Divine assistance by which we are enabled to do those things, which of ourselves we cannot do, and while it reveals the character of God to be that of infinite love, it sheds abroad in our hearts the love of Him who first loved us. Thus, in affording knowledge, power, and love, it shows itself commensurate with our whole being, with all our wants, and with the fullness of our happiness.

Christianity has its own difficulties, but it terminates all other difficulties; the mind breathes here and here alone, in its vital element, and finds all its powers occupied, all its aspirations fulfilled, and all its problems resolved, except those which are inherent to the finite intellect.

We find a fresh proof of the divine origin of Christianity in its being expressly adapted to the very narrow comprehension of the mind of man. What an immense interval is there between the human understanding and the reality of things. We know not the principles of existence; our knowledge extends, and that very confinedly, to what exists, but of how any thing exists we are left in utter darkness. And ignorant as we are of the elements of matter, and only acquainted with a few of their combinations, how could it be expected that the soul of man

should ever be able to ascend to communion with the mind which has created nature, and which has assigned to the universe its laws?

The human mind can carry on a lengthened chain of reasoning only through the medium of propositions couched in words, these words in their origin must be taken from sensible things, for sounds in their nature can only represent sounds, and when their signification is extended to take in outward objects it must be arbitrary, and by mutual agreement, and agreements previous to language can only be made by signs, which indicate directly objects present to the senses.

Thus the revelation of invisible things must be addressed to creatures all whose first notices are from sense, and it must be conveyed in language which they themselves have imperfectly formed with especial reference to sensible and outward objects. It might therefore be supposed that religion by becoming intelligible to the comprehension of creatures of clay would either be debased to sense itself, or attempting to convey notions to them which their nature was incapable of grasping, would become an airy dream, too subtle and impalpable to be shaped out by their earthly imaginations. But the Christian religion has overcome both these difficulties at once, it brings home religion to the mind through the strongest metaphors of sense, and yet it preserves altogether unstained its own spiritual purity.

It is by the very strength of its imagery, as Lowth has observed, that both these wonders are effected, for the metaphors which are applied to the Deity and the invisible world are so strong, that they are seen by the weakest understanding at once to be metaphorical; unlike the tamer figurative language of the ancient philosphers, which having a weaker and yet a more general analogy with the subjects to which it was applied, misled both the teachers

and the disciples, and filled their minds with the vain and fluctuating imagery of an unreal world, which was ever alternating between matter and mind.

But the Bible not only by sensible images gains an entrance into the weakness of our understandings, but by moral lessons, drawn from the senses, recalls our affections from the senses themselves, and fixes them upon those objects which though unseen are eternal. In the parables and in the proverbs we have a striking illustration that God has made all things double, that the material world is the shadow of the spiritual; and that even in those sensible and transitory objects round which our affections so readily cling, there are steps and props by which they may free themselves from spreading along the earth, and may ascend to spiritual desires and heavenly meditations.

The third part of the internal evidence consists in the harmony of the Divine attributes as revealed by Christianity. Independent of revelation, there is no true notion of God, as the self-existent Being, and whose perfections are involved in his self-existence. All other notions of God are either Polytheism, or Pantheism; either consist in animating nature with a number of living principles, which is the religion of imagination, or consider it as a whole, embracing all other existence in its own essence, which is the religion of reason, proceeding, in the absence of true principles, upon the base with which imagination supplies it. So that the very notion of Jehovah, the self-existent, the creator, and the purely spiritual and absolute Being, contains within itself a proof whence it was derived, from the Father of Lights, who reveals himself when it pleases him to men, but to men who of themselves, by their own seeking, could never find out the Almighty to perfection.

But it is not only in the general notion of the Divine

Being, but perhaps in the still more difficult task of exhibiting his attributes brought into harmonious action, that the Scriptures bear the mark of their Divine origin. If we consider the power of the Deity alone, we should naturally consider it, as Spinosa did, as flowing out with infinite force in all its operations, producing effects as boundless as itself, and swelling the tide of existence till it had neither shore nor limitation. But what then would become of the manifestation of his wisdom, it would require the understanding of other Gods to follow him in the infinity of his works; he sets the terms to his own Almightiness that we may be able to follow his goings forth, and that we may be enabled to trace in some instances, suited to our feeble understanding, how he has supplied the restriction of his all-powerful arm, by the ever diversified expedients of his infinite wisdom.

Farther, what understanding has ever fathomed the mysteries of prescience and pre-ordination, as compatible with the moral choice of agents who were placed in a state of probation, but whose choice must coincide with the plan which existed in the Divine mind for an eternity before they were brought into existence? The Bible is not intended to remove the landmarks of our understanding, and to launch us into depths too great for the range of our faculties, but it recognises in every instance a moral choice on the part of man, and predetermination on the part of Deity.

Again, God, in the loneliness of his own eternity, could have no other object or aim extrinsic to himself. It is for his own glory, and in the infinitely absolute exercise of his sovereignty, that he has acted and ever must act; such is his nature and such are his laws, for his laws are part of himself. Yet in giving reason to his creatures, (however feeble the glimmer of that reason may be when first

lighted,) he gives a pledge that he will act agreeably to his own gift, and though he renders an account of his matters to none, yet that his dealings shall be according to right reason as far as that incipient faculty shall be enabled to trace the proceedings of the Most High. Both these conditions of the divine proceeding are maintained to the utmost in the Christian system. God is represented as absolutely sovereign, and yet as appealing to that reason which he has bestowed upon his rebellious creatures, and which ever bears witness to the exceeding folly and sinfulness of their rebellion.

But it is in the exhibition of the Divine justice and goodness, those attributes which, in their full display, seem incompatible towards a race of sinful creatures, but whose union it is the very object of the Scriptures to set forth, that the Divine inspiration of these Scriptures shines out with uncontrollable evidence. This argument has been employed with much effect by Sandeman. (G.)

The internal evidences are yet only in their first rudiments, the extent which they may possibly embrace can scarcely as yet be indicated. They must ever increase, the more that we know of God, of nature, and of the mind.

X. After enumerating the various sources of evidence, from testimony, from prophecy, from the analogy between nature and revelation, from the adaptation of revelation to the mind of man, and from the harmony of the Divine character as displayed in the Scriptures; there still remains an immense mass of evidence, which, as it does not strictly fall under any of these heads, we have named the miscellaneous. It is furnished, as a new and additional evidence from all the other evidences, and is, of course, more complex and diversified. Breaking in upon us, as it does from every part, it would be difficult to distinguish or comprehend it under any sub-divisions; its proofs are

too numerous to be summed up, and too various to be classed.

To instance a few particulars. After the miracles recorded in the New Testament have served as a direct proof for Christianity, they afford an additional evidence, independent of the testimony which proves them to have been wrought. It requires much genius to describe consistently a feigned course of action, conformable to the ordinary course of nature, but where a miraculous story is feigned, consistency is generally out of the question. The super-human beings possess powers, and are actuated by motives at one moment of which they are divested the next; the exertion of their power, too, bears no analogy to the government of the world; they are energies which interrupt nature, not friendly assistances acting in the spirit of the author of nature, which assist her by higher means to attain her ends. But the miracles of Christianity are according to the designs of the ruler of the world; they tend to the same ends, and work in the same spirit as he does, who gave to nature her laws; they are consistent with each other, and consistent with the character of God; such a consistency is beyond the invention of man.

Again, the structure of prophecy, independent of the direct argument drawn from its fulfilment, displays in its compass a vastness and an intelligence which alone would seem to prove its divine origin. It embraces in one design the history of the world, and traces the scheme of providence from its first unfoldings to its full development. The risings and fallings of empire, instead of seeming the blind work of fortune, are interwoven with one great and regular plan, serving but as the scaffolding and preparation for a kingdom of peace and happiness which will be universal, and enduring, after the shifting scenery of this world's greatness shall have passed away and given place

for its entrance. So vast a plan of events is unparalleled, and quite beyond the views of man.

Though the character of God in all its parts may be considered as belonging to the internal evidence, strictly so called, and the same may be said of the character of Christ as it reflects the image and glory of God, and thus affords a direct proof of the divinity of his religion, yet there are portions of Christ's character, which, considered separately, may justly be classed as miscellaneous arguments. Such is the originality of Christ's character, which has been so well touched upon by Paley. Other parts of the internal evidence, besides the main stream of proof and argument, afford indirect support and separate ground for the truth of Christianity.

Every part of Scripture contributes to this miscellaneous evidence, from the account of the creation downwards. That the material world should begin to exist, though a principle capable of demonstration, is a principle originating with, and confined to the writings of Moses and the Hebrews, a principle which they ascribe not to the discovery of reason, but to an immediate revelation. "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth," was a truth at which the mind of man unassisted could never arrive. None of the ancient philosophers had any other notion beyond formation, the giving a shape to pre-existing materials, and emanation or the giving a new modification to some part of the Divine substance; and all their reasonings proceeded upon a negation of creation. From this error all their other errors arose; "ex nihilo nihil," at once determined the various forms of their philosophy, and was the occasion that the more closely they reasoned the wider they departed from the truth. The knowledge of the first verse of Genesis would have more availed them than all the arguments of all their schools, and from it alone we might draw a proof of the truth of Scripture.

The whole Bible abounds with diversified lights. Descending down the sacred volume, we might take each passage as it occurred. The fall of man, the antediluvians, the deluge, the dispersion of mankind, their genealogy, their early idolatry, partly in the way of internal evidence, and partly from the external testimony of tradition, might afford proofs of the genuineness of revealed religion, some feebler, others stronger, in their impression, but, when collected and combined together, presenting an array of formidable amount. In this wide field each writer finds some topic which more particularly pleases him, and which, for that reason, he probably over-states, and consequently discredits. Thus the omission of a future state among the sanctions of the legislation of Moses, has been ably, though with the air of a paradox, brought forward as an argument by Bishop Warburton. He might have shown a considerable probability that Moses was supported by miraculous sanctions, from this omission; but, unfortunately, calling it a demonstration, he has exaggerated every presumption into a probability, and every probability into a demonstrative proof; and his digressions are much more valuable than the slender thread of argument which connects them together.

Michaelis proposed, and with reason, the march of the Israelites through the desert, and their sojournings there, as a proof of the Divine mission of Moses; and there are various other points connected with their early history and with their theocracy, which might be brought forward as strong presumptions of a Divine establishment. In fine, the entire Bible, we repeat, whether viewed separately in its minute details, or considered in its harmony as a whole,—though composed by very different writers, at distant periods of time,—would be found to present evidence, with every degree of force, and in every diversity of form, to the truth of its Divine inspiration; and it is

in vain to attempt to enumerate all the various sources from which miscellaneous arguments may be drawn, as they are afforded by all subjects, from the earliest records downwards, receiving additions from all branches of knowledge, even from antiquarian researches among coins, inscriptions, and tombs.

XI. Additional to the sum of all the varieties of argument, is the force of cumulative evidence. Every error has but a side view by which it can impose upon the mind. Truth can be contemplated upon all sides, and every additional view brings a new accession to former proofs. Even through the errors that have prevailed in the world, a confirmation of the truth may be obtained.

There is less of positive error than is commonly supposed. Every fiction has had its origin in facts, and every erroneous opinion is a partial representation of the truth; for error is a parasite, which can only exist by twining itself around the stem of that truth which it destroys. Poetry is but history embellished; and if nature and events are not there represented such as they were in themselves, they were painted such as they were reflected in the mind of the poet. Mythology and its marvels are but the soul lending its own colouring and warmth to the unintelligent forces that are guiding matter through its various combinations. And early fable is but ignorance, which, in the absence of letters, throwing a veil over the past, assigns too great remoteness and magnitude to the ages which are so rapidly departing from the clear view of each other.

The doctrine of the universe being God, was a step towards the truth, gained from the scattered deifications of polytheism; and still farther, the emanative system, which traces all existence to the primal fountain, emanating as rays of light from the sun, came as near to the true nature of things as minds immersed in matter could well do, though, the principles being false, the more closely

they were pursued, the more faulty were the conclusions. Nor was Mohammedanism wholly erroneous in its fundamental tenets,—the unity of the Godhead, and a state of eternal retribution after death; and to these, no doubt, it owed its principal hold upon the mind. Thus all the errors that have engaged belief have one favorable aspect, and but one, and must be seen from one particular point of view to fascinate the mind, like the rocks in romance, which assume the appearance of a castle from some particular spot of ground, and when viewed in a peculiar light. Truth, on the contrary, bears examination from every quarter; and the more it is contemplated, the clearer must its evidence appear. As every being is in relation with the other beings around it, so every truth, as we have before observed, is in relation with all other truths; and the more of these relations we discover, the greater is the number of arguments with which we are furnished.

Hence, when drawn from a variety of different sources, a number of arguments, though each should be slight considered in itself, afford a strength of probability far beyond what the mere sum of their united presumptions would lead us to suppose. As it is by a number of small means concurring to one end that the greatest results are obtained, so it is from a number of these slight indications converging to one common centre from a number of distant points, that the greatest discoveries have been made. Thus Columbus found himself guided to America, and thus the explorers of the mind and the heavens have found their way to regions of undiscovered truth. This results from the unity of the universe, and from its being the work of the same infinite mind.

But if a number of concurring probabilities, though feeble when taken separately, afford by their union a strong tissue of evidence; how great a degree of moral

proof must be produced by all the powerful arguments for Christianity, so diversified in their nature, and so independent of each other? And who could define the infinitely small interval that separates so great a degree of probability from certainty? Taking Paley's Evidences alone, the probability of Christianity's being true, would be expressed, if it were expressed in the form of chances, by a very high power of figures; but what power of figures could express all the concentrated probabilities which separate the moral demonstration of Christianity from mathematical demonstration by a shade too slight to be adequately conceived.

XII. Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat. The Evidences of Christianity derive a last and crowning proof from their continual increase. Errors, which survive every other attack, cannot survive the attacks of time. The partial and local circumstances on which they are founded disappear, and the errors being thus deprived of their root and nourishment, after a time perish themselves. How utterly have the old heresies become obsolete! Were all the heresiarchs to revive, they could scarcely obtain a single disciple. Indeed, so have they faded away, that many heresies could scarcely be presented in such a form as to make them even a subject of curiosity. It seems as possible for a man to resume the toys of his childhood, as for the world to relapse into the mistaken notions which their ancestors so eagerly embraced, and for which they contended with so much devotion.

Truth alone in this mortal world is a gainer by the lapse of years; and time, while it is taking away the props of error, is adding to the bulwarks of truth. Friends and enemies alike contribute to establish truths which are subject to investigation on every side; and, from the conflict of opposition and support, every strong and every

weak position is revealed. It is thus that every succeeding generation receives the evidences of Christianity augmented.

Not but that there may be, within certain limits, an alternation of doubts and of arguments. Every new study and research present the objects of their inquiry, at their first disclosure, in an exaggerated and distorted point of view. Every new science, in as far as it is contrary to truth in its first cast and moulding, so may possibly be contrary to Christianity, till it is reduced to its just form and dimensions.

Hence sciences in their infancy may appear to lend their aid to infidelity, while, with their growth, and in their establishment, objections disappear, and they afford new arguments at last in support of Revelation.

While light is increasing, doubts are often increasing also, and a state of trial and probation is thus maintained; but the character is perfected by trial, and the doubts vanish, while the arguments prevail and remain forever.

It was the gross mistake of many advocates for Christianity to assert, that though the prophetical evidence might be increasing, the external evidence of testimony was upon the decrease, and this ungrounded opinion has received some countenance from Warburton. But though doubtless the eye-witnesses of the life and miracles of Christ had the strongest testimony; and next to them, those who communicated with eye-witnesses; yet with these exceptions, even external testimony has been gaining strength since the age which succeeded that of the apostles; and far from suffering any diminution, has been increasing in its clearness and certainty. Grotius, as a Christian advocate, is superior to Origen; and Paley is exceedingly superior to Grotius.

The more the arguments for Christianity have been examined, and sifted, and opposed, the more have they

shown out with an increasing brightness; and not only have they improved in excellence, but in variety. Every new writer adds his contribution; and while Paley's works remain as perpetual standards, the external evidence, in other hands, has acquired every diversity of illustration and arrangement.

The evidence from prophecy is confessed by all to be upon the increase, and is, from its very nature, continually progressive; better works, and impending events will throw a new light upon the prophetic writings, and will dissipate the mistaken notions which are widely entertained.

The Internal Evidence is yet in its infancy, and received its commencement from Butler not a century ago; but the study of the Scripture, and the study of nature, will slowly and continually raise the magnificent pile of the Internal Evidence; while in the ultimate success of Christianity, and in its greater efficacy over the lives of individuals, as well as in the conduct of states, all will be able to read in living and visible characters, that God is its author, and that holiness and happiness are its grand objects, and its certain attainments.

PART II.

GENIUS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

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1. Inductive Philosophy gradually applied. 2. Reason and Revelation. 3. Authority and Inspiration. 4. Divine Economy of Means and Miracles. 5. Preconceived Opinions. 6. The True more than the Supernatural the Object of Scripture. 7. Scriptural Scholiasts and Commentators. 8. Parallelism Indestructible and Self-interpreting. 9. Completeness of the Scriptures. 10. Earliest Poetry resembles the Hebrew. 11. Simplicity and Perpetuity of the Hebrew Life and State. 12. Primitive Energy of the Hebrew. 13. In the Scriptures, Union of the Human Intelligence with the Divine. 14. Christ the Centre of the Scriptures. 15. The Origin of Types in Nature and Revelation. 16. Scriptures Unaffected by Time.

I. The Philosophy of Lord Bacon has been gaining ground but slowly. It was sometime of being applied to the study of nature, where its use is most obvious; it has lately and imperfectly been applied to the study of mind; and still more imperfectly to the study of religion. Such is the slow progress of the advancement of knowledge, and so many are the difficulties which beset its early way!

Yet the material world was always spread out before the view of man; and his faculties, instead of spending themselves in their own proper contemplation, flow out by a Divine and almost irresistible impulse, upon the external objects with which he is surrounded. Besides the arts are elder than the sciences; they are the first and immediate

offspring of his wants and necessities; and the arts are always inductive, employed in observation and in experiment; and these might have led their followers by an easy and smooth process, to the footstool of genuine science.

But the mind is unconscious of its own weakness, and the conviction of its limited powers, could only be gained, as all true knowledge must be, by experience; by trying what its own unaided efforts could do in the discovery of truth; and whether or not by an innate energy, it could excogitate the true system of the universe, instead of waiting for the slow results of experiment and observation.

As the law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, shutting us up, by the impossibility of accomplishing its commandments, to trust in the one Being who alone could fulfil them; so Bacon found a teacher in the Genius of Greece, which showed him by its wonderful, but unsuccessful efforts, that there must be some better guide to science, than the energy of our understanding when unsupported by the data of experience.

Now if it was natural to the mind to imagine that it possessed—included within its own being, the elements of all knowledge; and if it could believe that it understood the material world, unshaken in its conviction by the monstrous representation of every part of nature which it was all the while shaping out; representations more uncouth than the hieroglyphic paintings of the gods, and of the creation of the world, spread over their sacred edifices by the hands of the priests of Babylon and of Egypt; still more natural was it to suppose that its own nature was thoroughly comprehended. But, alas! every original thinker had an original theory. Every one was confident in his own view, but all their views were discordant; and the mind which aspired to know all things, was evidently unknown to itself.

If theories respecting the material world were extrava-

gant, checked as they were, by the evidence of the senses; and if theories about the mind were discordant, in spite of the testimony continually borne by consciousness; much more were all reasoning concerning the Deity lost in endless clouds, and inextricable error, wandering, as they continually did, through the waste and infinite void.

Furnished, as we are, with the clue of Bacon's Philosophy, we can traverse, though with slow steps, and meeting with many an obstacle, the labyrinth of nature, unravelling the mysteries that are without us, by the aid of observation, and the mysteries that are within us, by the more painful and precarious operation of reflection upon our own thoughts; but where is the new philosophy or the new Organum by which we might find out the Almighty? We can know exactly as much of him, but no more, than he himself is pleased to reveal. It is to the Bible alone, that inductive philosophy is to be applied, receiving the Divine declarations as the ultimate facts in religion; in the same way in which the laws or ultimate facts of nature, become the basis of natural philosophy; and the ultimate principles of consciousness become the foundation of morals.

II. "Here, therefore, I note this deficiency," says Lord Bacon, "that there hath not been to my understanding sufficiently inquired and handled the true limits and use of reason in spiritual things, as a kind of Divine dialectic;" and what was a want in Lord Bacon's time, remains a want still.———Here we have no intention of entering fully into the subject which deserves to be considered either separately, or in connection with the other branches of inductive logic. It may however be remarked that the deficiency of a treatise upon this subject is of the less consequence that the Bible itself supplies the want. It does not indeed supply the rules of the Divine dialectic

which Bacon speaks of, but it does still better, it furnishes us with numerous and varied examples; it not only lays down the fundamental principles on which religion is founded, but it draws out these principless into every application which can be required for the ordinary uses of life. Mere reason is not a self-sufficing faculty, it can do nothing unless it have the proper data on which to proceed. As we have before observed, all reason must terminate in first principles; and these first principles are a Divine communication no less than the truths of revelation. The mode of communication may be different, but we are passive in the reception of each.

Thus the stream of knowledge descends upon us from two sources; and of the way in which these sources unite together, we have an example and parallel in the two inlets of sense, sight and touch, by which we become acquainted with the different modifications of space. By touch we can only grope our way, and derive some confined notion of the forms that surround us; sight alone, would present colors without depth and distance; but sight and touch, when their notices are blended together, open out a new world of vision, and carry us beyond our narrow neighborhood, to the remote prospect of other worlds, and to the immensity of the heavens.

III. The Scriptures come to us as absolute truth, pure from any admixture of error. We are to receive them, not as the words of man, which ought always to be canvassed and examined, but as the words of God, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived; whose knowledge is truth, as his essence is reality. Every communication from God is not only true but imperative. It is the will of Him whose will must be done. The authority of Scripture is therefore the authority of God. Whatever is affirmed in the sacred volume is proved. "It is written," is a decision which admits of no appeal. Every sentence in

the Bible is as much sanctioned by the place which it occupies as if, like the law given upon Mount Sinai, it were ratified with all the thunders of the heavens.

And it is necessary that it should be so. Reason may detect its own errors, but mistakes in a revelation would be irremediable; to all serious inquirers, the errors would be forever enshrined by the sanctity of the heavenly truths with which they were surrounded. Of course it is not supposed that religion sanctions the imperfections of human language in which it is necessarily conveyed, or that it anticipates the discoveries of science by revealing a complete system either of natural or of moral philosophy.

But the more importance we attach to Scripture, the more importance we must also attach to the inquiry concerning the canon of Scripture; or to the rule which separates the inspired books from those which are merely apocryphal. This is a question either very plain, or very difficult, according to the manner in which it is handled. Jones has observed, "It is not so easy a matter as is commonly imagined, rightly to settle the canon of the New Testament. For my own part, I declare with many learned men, that in the whole compass of learning, I know no question involved with more intricacies and perplexing difficulties than this." And in his work, which is neither deficient in ingenuity or learning, he has made his point good, since in the manner in which he has treated the subject, it does present considerable difficulties. On the other hand, if we look to Paley, who has omitted all doubtful and extraneous matter, the question is easily resolved, and the decision is both prompt and conclusive. But even without Paley's citation of authorities, the canon of Scripture may be settled, on the plainest and most obvious considerations.

With respect to the Old Testament, we may remark, that the Jews, before the time of our Saviour, had lost the

use of the ancient Hebrew, and had widely departed from its genius. The spirit of their writings was thenceforth borrowed from the Greeks on the one side, and from the Orientals on the other. Their writers could as soon have added a cubit to their stature, as have emulated by one additional work their ancient Scriptures.

If they were unable to add, they were also precluded from diminishing, their reverence for their Sacred writings on the one hand, and the Greek version of Alexandria, on the other, prevented the loss of any portion of the Old Testament. Farther, the Hebrew canon received the sanction of our Saviour, which, of itself, determines the integrity of the Old Testament.

But, if God by his providence thus secured the preservation of that covenant which was to be done away, we cannot, for a moment, suppose that less care was taken of the New. The gospels authenticate each other by their concurring testimony, while the last, recognizing the three first, stamps them with the sanction and authority of St. John : and the various diatessarons, or harmonies on the four Gospels from the earliest Christian antiquity, marked out the recognized number, and secured it either from augmentation or diminution.———The epistles, besides their internal evidence, were preserved in the primitive churches in their authentic form, such as they were received from the hands of the Apostles themselves. If some portions of the New Testament, were for a time, and for mistaken reasons, esteemed doubtful, the question is little affected by this transient suspension. The Apocalypse of St. John contains within itself, its own verification, and those epistles which were once doubted, being of small importance in settling disputes, are doubted of no longer, by those who receive the others as genuine.

Lastly, All the component parts of the Sacred volume possess a very high internal evidence of their authenticity,

from their forming a whole, where nothing is redundant, and nothing is deficient.

But this subject, from the great variety of particulars it might embrace, would require a separate treatise.

As the canon of Scripture has been involved in many of its difficulties from the wavering evidence of the Fathers, who embroil every question on which they are cited as witnesses, through the vagueness of their testimony, and the inaccuracy of their information; and as the question has been farther perplexed by the ingenuity of the critics, always successful in raising difficulties, but ever feeble in solving them; so the authority of Scripture has been weakened by a number of idle and scholastic questions about inspiration, and the different modes of it, as if it were not sufficient for us to know that the Bible is truth itself, that it has God for its author, and safety and happiness for its end.

Not one of those writers who dogmatise so securely about the degrees of inspiration, and determine with precision the portion of divine assistance which each prophet or historian received, could have described the operations of our unaided faculties in the smallest matters of ordinary concern. The simple affirmation of Paul is sufficient for all practical use, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

IV. In tracing by inductive philosophy, the operations of divine wisdom, nothing is more remarkable, than the economy of means observed by divine power. Indeed, as we formerly observed, it is only by limitation of the means that the divine skill in using them is visible to men. Infinite power unrestrained would immediately arrive at every possible end, but its immeasurable energy would be

beyond the reach of our finite comprehension. The exercise of the divine attributes is therefore circumscribed, and accommodated to our humble powers, and the Deity, by the smallness, or apparent inadequacy of the means he employs, discloses by a new and unexpected, but clear opening, the excellency of his wisdom, amid the restrictions of his power.

Again, nothing is more striking in this law of limitation, than the small means by which magnificent results are produced. The "solid globe" is built of scattered atoms; the visible creation consists of invisible parts; and all that is called sensible, by its minuteness, escapes the notice of our senses.———Not only is Divine economy beheld in the insignificance of the atoms themselves, but in the perpetual use that is drawn from them. These atoms are in continual service; no sooner are they freed from one combination, but they must enter into another; not an atom is for a moment thrown aside or unemployed. The same marks of Divine economy are observable in the works of the Saviour; "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." The same parsimony of creative energy that is remarkable in nature, distinguishes his miracles; though he had the power of changing stones into bread, he did it not. There was with him no waste or profuse display of omnipotence: his miracles, though supernatural, are still natural; they are conceived and executed in harmony with the resources and laws of nature which they suspend; and even where the object is to exhibit a power of controlling nature, there is a great economy discernible in the display of that power; whatever the Saviour did, met the intended end, and went no farther.

Simplicity of means, and multiplicity of results, is the Divine impress on the works of nature; and simplicity, with multiplicity, characterizes the scheme of revelation,

and the works of the Saviour. In the exercise of miraculous healing, when he benefited the individual, he benefited the world. While he gave a proof of his Divine mission, he gave a type of his healing the soul. He healed both the body and the soul through the same medium, that of faith.

In the interior of religion the same conduct is observed; the simplest means are directed to the most important ends; no principle violent or contrary to nature is introduced, but from the ruins of our nature the materials are selected which are best fitted for its reparation.

V. Far contrary to the conduct of the Divine Being are the preconceived theories formed by human creatures concerning the mode in which it was to be expected that the Deity would reveal himself to man. "If Jupiter spoke, he would use the language of Plato," is a compliment which marks out how metaphysical and oratorical the wisest of the human race expected that the majesty of heaven would be, if ever he addressed the sons of men. And some Christian critics have been of no dissimilar opinion when they have attempted to subject the Scriptures to the rules of classical composition. Other divines imagine that writings which proceed from God must be dissimilar in all respects to writings which proceed from men. Some have conceived that the obvious sense of Scripture is not the most important sense; and that revelation is chiefly useful, as it suggests a new revelation to the mind. Others have supposed that every sense is the true sense; and that, as the Author of the Bible is infinite, so the meanings of the Bible must be infinite too.

Thus revelation has come to resemble Virgil's mystical tree at the mouth of Avernus, thickly covered with visionary leaves, and on every leaf a dream:

> "Ulmus, opaca, ingens; quam sedem Somnia volgo
> Vana tenere ferunt, foliisque sub omnibus haerent."

Scripture has thus been isolated from human sense and human life, as if it stood alone, and incomprehensible by the ordinary exercise of the human faculties; and it seems to have been forgotten that it was necessarily connected with this earth, conveyed as it was through the instrumentality of human minds, conceived in the finiteness of human thoughts, and clothed with the imperfection of human language.

VI. But not only has revelation no isolated or unearthly character, but it is stamped with the peculiarities of each of the human minds of those who were chosen to be the instruments of conveying it to their fellow-creatures. It is the true, and not the supernatural, which is the aim of the Scriptures,—truth freed from the admixture of error, impressed with the earnestness and passion of human interest, but, at the same time, with a Divine solemnity and sanction, with the impress and character of God. The minds of the sacred writers retain all their distinctive peculiarities and individuality; and their writings admit of the same illustrations which the works of other writers do, from their country and climate, from history, and from institutions.

By this simplicity of procedure in the Divine Author of our religion, we are furnished with new proofs for the authenticity of Scripture, and with new illustrations to dispel whatever difficulties there may be in its contents. While the humanity of the sacred writers on all other subjects, and their being only on a level with their ancient country in worldly matters, affords most striking relief, and an invincible argument for their inspiration, when we observe them upon the subject of religion, not only rising above the level of their own faculties, but to an incalculable height beyond the soarings of the greatest men, who in all ages and nations have attempted to explore the nature and

will of the Divinity, or to descry the regions allotted to mankind after death.

VII. Though critics and scholiasts are proverbially incapable of attaining to the spirit of the author they comment upon, yet few scholiasts have been less qualified for the task of criticism than many of the commentators who have employed their labors on the Bible. They, according to the measure of their ability, have sought to elucidate the Scriptures by a comparison of different manuscripts, by new readings and by new renderings, or by eliciting a new meaning from the received reading, and so far this was well. But if the meaning of Scripture depended solely, or in any great degree upon the authority of manuscripts, small would be the hopes of its being speedily ascertained. The right classification of manuscripts has as yet baffled every attempt. No two original thinkers can agree as to the right rule for estimating the value of contending readings. The grounds they proceed upon are arbitrary assumptions, and the number and supposed antiquity of manuscripts must bow in this, as in other cases, to the authority of good sense, and to the spirit of the general context. It is no difficult matter, considering the variable import of words, to give a variety of possible renderings to a disputed passage, especially if we neglect to do justice to the scope of the author's argument, but the context must ultimately determine which is the right one, and we must choose the true meaning, not arbitrarily but according to the connection of the writer's thoughts, and suitably to the peculiarities of his genius. Verbal alteration and minute criticism are excellent in their proper place, but it requires heads of stronger texture than are generally conversant in such matters, to assign them their due value.

To determine the principal points of religion, our English Bible affords every requisite aid. No translation was

ever executed with more spirit than the standard version of England. It was done when the English language, as far as prose is concerned, was in the moment of projection, ready to run into any mould that should be given to it. Seldom was there less of a sectarian spirit than in the early periods of the Reformation. Both the language and the thoughts of the time were well adapted to enter into the spirit of the Hebrew writings.

Of late much has been done with respect to minute criticism, but the larger grasp of mind is wanting. New translations surpass the standard version in detached parts, but come widely short of it as a whole, and it is by its spirit as a whole, by the tone of its sentiments and general train of its thoughts, that the truths of the Bible are most clearly discerned and most fully proved.

If the niceties of language were of much moment in determining difficulties and obscurities, few works would at first view appear to be in a worse situation than the Bible. It stands alone, separated by its antiquity from contemporary writings. The patriarchs, it is evident from Genesis, disused their native dialect of Mesopotamia, and assumed that of Palestine. (H.) The Phenician tongue, though well meriting immortality, as containing the discoveries of the Phenicians, and the arts of the Carthaginians, who excelled both in commerce and manufactures, has perished in all its branches, its remains in the Bible alone excepted, nor has Providence thought fit to preserve it, though even portions of it in profane books, would have thrown greater light on the sacred writings than all the other languages together.———It is in vain to attempt, or at least the attempt is precarious, to supply the defect by Arabic or Syriac roots, or to determine the sense of ancient words by more modern though cognate dialects. The Scriptures alone, from their peculiar structure, supply the defect of other materials, and from the self-interpret-

ing form in which they are composed require no extrinsic aid.———The Greek of the New Testament is too foreign and barbarous to receive much explanation from the niceties of classical Greek, and both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures have their difficulties chiefly resolved, not from without but from within,—from examining the order of the whole and the disposition of the parts.

It must be acknowledged, however, that if Scripture has its peculiar difficulties with regard to verbal interpretation, it has also its peculiar facilities. The words of the New Testament are Greek, but the thoughts are Hebrew, and it thus derives a double illustration from the Septuagint and from the original Scriptures. The Hebrew, the most primitive language which exists, containing within itself almost all the roots from which the language is derived, and forming its derivations by a simple and inartificial process, is of all tongues the most self-interpreting. The derivations of the Hebrew have been clouded by the fancies of etymologists, but if due caution were observed, the structure of the language through all its branches and varying shades of significance, might be represented without any complexity, and with considerable certainty.

Still the best commentary is to be found not in the words, but in the thoughts.

A new race of commentators is required to throw light, not on the letter but on the spirit of works, whether sacred or profane; to search after the inward mould which gives the outward appearance its peculiar form; to seek for the hidden fire of life which, though unseen itself, is yet felt in the warmth it communicates to every part. If Homer and Virgil were in this manner studied by men who possessed somewhat of a kindred spirit, we should see that authors even the most frequently commented upon, would present a fresh and unexhaused region.———Former

critics have found but grains of gold, carried away to a distance from its native bed, but a rich and original mine of criticism remains still to be opened. ——— In the sacred writers, equally new and undiscovered treasures are yet awaiting the explorer. The dry bones, as in the Valley of Vision, will be clad with flesh and warmed with life, the genius of each sacred writer will be resuscitated, and the peculiar point of view will be gained from which objects were contemplated, and according to which they received their coloring and their shading, their prominence, and their distance.

VIII. It must, nevertheless, be observed, that the Scriptures have been more favored than other writings, with a critic who has a peculiar discernment of the characteristics of each writer that he studied.

The genius of Lowth, without possessing the strength of Warburton, or being stamped with any strong peculiarity of coloring, possessed a wonderful and almost instinctive perception of the spirit of the Hebrew writings, and of the essential differences which separated them from the works of later times. His Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, and his Commentary on Isaiah, are the finest specimens of criticism that we have, though they are far from having had full justice done to them as yet in general estimation.

The German School, who, under the conduct of Michaelis, gave some promise of taking Lowth for their guide, soon wandered from the right way, and mistaking learning for wisdom, memory for taste, and extravagance for genius, have given good examples of what ought to be avoided by their failure and absurdities. Every work ought to be commented upon in the same spirit in which it is written, but no two minds can be more diverse than that of a German anti-supernaturalist, and a Hebrew prophet.

In his own country, other writers, with more pretension than Lowth, have been looked up to as teachers of sacred

criticism, but who possess neither his sound mind, nor his divining genius. When he has been followed, it has frequently been by scholars more apt to exaggerate than to illustrate the principles of their master ; men, according to Marvel,

> " Such as disquiet always what is well,
> And by ill imitating would excel."

Lowth, as might have been expected, himself often carries the principle of parallelism too far, but this is the common fate of criticism. Genius, king-like, dispenses without difficulty with its own laws, while critics, too subservient to the laws which they have discovered, are for enforcing them rigidly upon every occasion. Still Lowth, in his discovery and application of parallelism to the Holy Scripture, (without even enumerating his excellent remarks on each of the sacred writers,) has done more than any modern author for elucidating their genius.

Parallelism is the peculiar structure of the Hebrew writings, by means of which they have been enabled to resist the darkness which time brings over other writings, and to repair the losses which the negligence of transcribers have occasioned. While every sentence has its corresponding and equivalent member, the sense, which in one is obscured, in the other remains perfect ; or if an error should have crept into each, it is impossible that they should be parallel errors, at once corresponding to each other, and to the general structure of the context. A conjectural reading has much more certainty here than in other writings, since the conjecture is checked by the condition that the conjectural reading must suit both members of the sentence.

In this peculiar structure of the sacred writings, we trace the same design as in the structure of the human body. From the human frame being double, the loss of

an eye does not altogether deprive us of sight, nor the loss of one limb, of the power of moving.

But not only is each sentence in the Bible parallel to its neighbor, but the doctrines of the Bible are parallel to each other; one truth is set over against another, and each doctrine has its place determined by its relation to the system. Doctrines, again, are ever placed parallel and co-relative to duties, and duties to doctrines; for truth is ever illustrated by practice; doctrine branches into duty, and duties ever recall the motives from which they are performed.

IX. The Scriptures are distinguished by their completeness. All the portions of each inspired book are in harmony with the rest, and all these books fit into each other, forming one complete system; where the same great truths are again and again represented, with the utmost simplicity; and where all the useful application of these truths are unfolded, in every variety of light and position. Thus the principle of parallelism is not confined to minute portions of the Sacred books, but enlarged and multiplied, is interwoven and expanded throughout the entire Bible. The whole form of the Scriptures, which consists in the continual evolution of one Divine plan, gives every facility for discovering and contemplating sacred truths; exhibited as they are, from their earliest disclosure to their full accomplishment. The cardinal doctrines are now brought prominently forward; now they are implied without being explicitly asserted, as the principles and postulates on which depend many chains of reasoning. The sublimest tenets are adduced as the motives to the most ordinary actions, or are involved in a brief thanksgiving, in a sudden parenthesis, or in the turn of a phrase.

As God is always similar to himself, his purposes and the manifestations of his character are ever the same.

One Divine proceeding throws light upon another, and we are led from dispensation to dispensation, with ever increasing evidence of the truth.

In Genesis we have the first outlines of the patriarchal religion, and of the transition from it to the temporary and typical dispensation of the Jews. In Job again, we have the truths of religion, as far as revealed to the Patriarchs, more amply developed, and brought into a dramatic form, and placed before our eyes. In the moral law of Moses, we see the clear manifestation of the holiness of the Divine Being, and in the ceremonial law, we have the foreshadows of the great atonement, by which guilt was to be removed. And thus, with the change of generations, and the addition of new Divine intimations, we have new light respecting the Truths of Religion, which are ever the same in themselves, and yet ever expanding according to the ascending position of him who observes them. In the settlement of the Jews in Canaan under Joshua, whether considered in itself, or emblematic of events still future; in the apostacy of the Jews, their punishments and their deliverances under the Judges; in the story of the Gentile woman who united herself to Israel, and to the God of Israel; in the establishment of the prophetic, and of the kingly offices in addition to the priestly institutions and emblems which had been established by Moses; in God's mercies and judgments, and in the ever diversified, and yet ever-constant tenor of his providence to one separated people, we have our information respecting the Divine character continually varied and augmented. In the Psalms we have David, the beloved of the Lord, and whose heart overflowed with all holy affection, expressing himself in poetry, which has ever since been offered up as incense by every heart touched by the Divine Spirit; and which, while it is a model for the believer, is at the same time typical of Him in whom the believer trusts. In the works

of Solomon we possess the utmost both of the wisdom and the vanity of this world, and are led forward to a world where there is neither emptiness nor vexation, while we are conducted beyond the maxims of worldly prudence, to the words of Him who is the heavenly and eternal wisdom. In the nuptial Song of Solomon we have the new relation in which God was about to stand to his espoused church, when he was no longer to be called Baali but Ishi, and when converts, numerous as the drops of the morning dew, were to be clad in wedding garments, and to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. In Isaiah we have the glories of the Messiah's kingdom converting even the gloom of the captivity of the Jews into interminable splendor ; and in Jeremiah, though there is more of adversity than prosperity, still the Sun of Righteousness is visible throughout the intervals of the storm. In Ezekiel we behold the transitory and shadowy priesthood of the Jews enlarged into a more glorious and spiritual worship ; and in Daniel we see the termination of all kingly power in the never ending empire of the Messiah. While each of the Minor prophets presents some varied and separate view of the Divine government, Malachi closes the ancient Scriptures with a pre-intimation of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness ; and Matthew, after so long a silence of the prophetic spirit, without any break, connects the ancient Scriptures with the new, and completes the prophecies by pointing out their accomplishment in the Saviour. As Matthew addresses the Jews, so does Luke the Gentiles, opening out the way of salvation to them who before had been far from righteousness. Mark has reduced the same matter to the utmost brevity ; and John has added, as a completion of all the Gospels, the very spirit and essence of the doctrines of the Saviour. The Acts of the Apostles unite the Gospels and the Epistles ; and each of the Epistles, while it contains more general

reference to all the leading doctrines of religion, exemplifies with more minute distinctness some particular view. The Epistle to the Romans is more systematic and full, because Paul, not having visited them in person, naturally goes over the whole truth of Scripture without reference to any previous communication. The divisions at Corinth gave occasion to the full exposition of the unity of the church, and of the membership of each individual; as the denial of the resurrection does to the doctrine of the glorified body, and of the distribution of rewards. The Epistle to the Galatians maintains the purity and simplicity of the faith, in opposition to the legality of judaizing teachers. And the Epistle to the Ephesians shows that the powers of language were unequal to express all the fulness of Christ, which is communicated from the Head in abounding grace to all the members of the body.

But while each of the Epistles has its peculiar and pre-eminent topic, the Epistles of the different Apostles all vary according to their character and situation, each suited to the natural disposition of the writer, and to the particular circumstances in which he was placed. And the Apocalypse completes the whole system of Revelation, giving the utmost development to the scheme of Divine providence; uniting and concluding all the prophecies that went before, and introducing the church, after all its trials and changes, first into the millennial rest of earth, and then into the never-ending sabbath of heaven.

X. The Poetry of the Hebrews, though it now remains a solitary monument of antiquity, unparalleled by any large work now extant of other nations, was probably not dissimilar to the usual structure of primeval verse. A fragment of antediluvian poetry preserved by Moses, corresponds exactly to the Hebrew model. And the post-diluvian nations, in their earliest antiquity, were in all likelihood conformable to the Hebrews in the structure of

their verse. The prophecy of Balaam, the poetry of Edom, and the songs of the Amorites, which are preserved in the Bible, seem to prove this; and it is further confirmed by the consideration that the origin of this peculiar structure was the necessary result of the imperfection of primitive language.

It were a subject of much curiosity, though we fear also of great uncertainty, to determine the earliest forms of poetic verse among the different nations. Verse consists in symmetry, but at first it must have been symmetry of thought rather than of sound. The derivation of languages shows that they were in their origin monosyllabic; and the earliest alphabets, being unfurnished with characters for vowels, show of how little importance they were esteemed. If the consonants were marked, it was sufficient; vowels were supplied either as a matter of course, or according to the varying use of the country. In all primitive tongues vowels were elements of small consequence, and those characters which were afterwards appropriated to vowels, were, in their origin, rather varying degrees of aspiration.

In such languages there could be little prosody, and sound was but a secondary consideration, therefore the only alternative left to the first poets, was that the thoughts should harmonize and respond to each other, since the rudeness of their speech precluded any regular rythm. The gradual effect of uniting music to the earliest poetry was continually to enlarge and soften those first rude though emphatic dialects, while, by the various compositions of words, language lost its monosyllabic form, and receded more and more from the harsh and untuneable radicals from which it was derived.

But though versification came to consist either of measured or assonant syllables, still traces of the first mode of composition may be discerned wherever the antique cast

was affected. The verses of the Grecian oracles, the couplets or triplets of the Goths and the Welsh; in the East parts of the Sanscrit writings, and the earliest odes of the Chinese, retain some vestiges of that symmetrical composition by which the writings of the Hebrews are so strongly marked. In the Greek chorus the same character is preserved, though on a larger scale, with the same alternation of the song and the dance, as when Miriam, taking up the words of Moses, led the women with timbrels and dances to celebrate the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. Thus one division of the Greek chorus is set over against the other, moves in the same measure, and re-echoes the same sentiments. Among the Hebrews this is the perpetual structure of their songs, one band of singers with musical instruments and of dancers repeats and prolongs the sentiments which has just been spoken by another, and, like the echoes from nature, deepens and confirms the praises offered to Jehovah.

XI. Moses and Lycurgus discerned the root of all mutations in government, and moulded the polity of their respective nations with a view to perpetuate their institutions. All changes in Society take place either from a change of property or from a change in opinion. That form of Government was therefore best fitted to resist innovation, which, by a perpetual Agrarian law, reduced the fortunes of the citizens to nearly the same level, and by excluding wealth and luxury, excluded the satiety of superabundance and its restless desire of novelty.

Such a state of society was also peculiarly adapted to perpetuate the same opinions. The nation of the Jews continuing for a series of years to consist chiefly of yeomanry, cultivating their paternal farms at a moderate rent, which was devoted to the support of a ceremonial religion, and of a hereditary priesthood, had ever before

them the same appearances of nature, and the same solemnities of worship.

This imagery is not only perpetual from its simplicity, it is also universal, their climate and their country being placed in the middle regions of the earth, the sacred writers abound in allusions and usages which are intelligible to earth's extremities. The Laplander and the Negro live on different productions and under different skies, the one has no winter, and the other scarcely any summer, but the allusions of the Hebrew Poets, and their images are intelligible to both. Judea united the phenomena of summer and winter; the pasturage of the north with the palms of the tropics; and abounded in corn and wine and oil, the most favored productions of the earth.

Could laws enforce themselves, and were they independent of the weakness and mutability of human creatures, Sparta and Israel would have been perpetual commonwealths, unless overturned by force from without. Every Israelite would have retained his own hereditary garden, and would have been placed exactly in the same situation as his forefathers; fixed to the same spot, with the same hills and vales before his eyes. The priesthood would have been forever celebrating the same rites. The arts would have been forever at a stand, having supplied man's first necessities, nothing more would have been required of them. Men would have beheld their institutions as stable as the movements of the heavenly bodies. But in human affairs the design of Providence is not permanence but progression. The Jewish commonwealth having answered the purposes for which it was intended, was to be enlarged through successive changes into a universal and spiritual dominion. Yet though the republic of the Jews has ceased to exist, still their cast of thought and model of life, like the pyramids of Egypt, appear distinctly

outlined even to the far distant observer, and their genius and their writings tower above the waste of antiquity, and the ruins of other nations, vast, simple, and enduring.

XII. The Scriptures are marked strongly by the character of vitality, of all writings they lose least by time or by translation. Even the poverty of the language of the Hebrews contributes to the energy of their thoughts, as the mountain torrent, far from being impeded by the rocks which would confine it, only rushes more rapidly along its narrow channel. The Hebrew writings resemble the first characters that the hand of man traced, chiseled with a pen of iron, and legible to a distance on the sides of the mountains on which they were engraved.

Whatever in other respects is gained by education, much is lost in originality. Our images want the sharp and deep chiseling of the ancients, they are but the copies of impressions that thousands of years ago were taken fresh and vivid from nature. The Hebrews describe the world perfectly, such as it is presented to the outward senses; not imperfectly, such as it is imagined in ages of learned ignorance, when it is half-perceived, and half-conceived, according to some erroneous system of mistaken science. The appearances of nature are ever the same, while the dreams of knowledge, falsely so called, are ever disappearing.

The simple and natural writings of the Hebrews, far from losing by the lapse of years, more deeply affect our feelings as voices from a world which is departed, and as monuments of manners which can never return. Like the poems of Homer, they are the offspring of the poetical age of the human race, and appear to be thought and uttered by more energetic men than now breathe upon the earth.

But not only have the Hebrew writings more energy and life, but that life is more easily transmitted to other climes and ages. The primitive forms of speech, like the

elements of primitive language, easily incorporate with other tongues, and while the more delicate thoughts of later poets can scarcely survive transfusion into another language, the mind of Homer, and of the Hebrews, passes immortal like the transmigrating spirit from one body to another, with all the freshness of youth and of a life unknowing of decay. The difference between the genius of the east and west, disappears in the Scriptures, and both are there united together. The strong and masculine sense of the Europeans is clothed in the fervid imagery of orientals; and all the thoughts of the human mind, and all its emotions, are embodied in the worship of a Being, before whom the human race stand all alike, the vast family of one common Father.

XIII. The Scriptures are striking, from their singularity; they unite the view of either world, and present each in its just proportions. All sublunary things are viewed from an amazing eminence, and shrink from their imaginary importance. The Bible, like the astronomy of Copernicus, no longer leaves the earth in the centre of the universe, but diminishes its magnitude to a point in space, and its duration to a moment in time.

As compositions, the Scriptures are divine and yet human; the mind of Him is everywhere apparent in them, with whom all terrestrial ages are fleeting as a morning dream, and in whose sight the myriads of worlds are circumscribed within a narrow circle; yet human feelings and human interests are as vividly cared for as if this earth were all, and Providence were watching for it alone. There is nothing stoical amid the sufferings of the Hebrew martyrs. Life has full possession of them with all its joys and sorrows; but under a divine transmutation these sorrows are sanctified into complainings for the cloud which sin has interposed between man and his Maker; and the joys are enlarged into the triumphant hope of

immortality. And the evanescent concerns of this life, instead of passing away with its short-lived generations, become, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the emblems of a future dispensation, pledges of the divine promises; the fore-shadows of immortal life.

XIV. The inspired Scriptures derive their singular unity, not only from all the doctrines forming one vast and ever during system of Truth, but from all the rays of heavenly light converging upon one glorious and divine Person, who is the sun and the centre of the whole dispensation, "to Him give all the Prophets witness." Whatever may be their theme in the first instance, it terminates and rests at last upon the advent of the promised deliverer. Whether they sing of judgment or of mercy, they are carried forward to the great King, who shall break in pieces his enemies with a rod of iron, but who shall rule over his obedient subjects with the sceptre of righteousness and peace. To Him give all the Apostles witness. Their lives were spent in proclaiming his salvation, their blood was shed in confirmation of his faithfulness and truth. To Him give all his disciples witness in all ages of the world. To Him the true church gives witness, acknowledging his omniscience to foreshow the trials that were to befal believers, and his Almightiness to rescue them from all dangers, confessing that he is the first and the last, and that in his hand are the keys of life and of death.

The first Adam was but a shadow of Him that was to come; the true head of those who are redeemed from among men. In Him we are rescued from the judgments impending on a world lying in wickedness; in Him our true Noah, we find rest and renovation of life in a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

In Abraham, the type and example of all believers, we

see also the similitude of Him who is the origin and Father of a separated people. As Isaac, He is led as a lamb to the slaughter. As Israel, He has power with God and has prevailed for us. As Joseph, He is gone before us to preserve life. As Moses and Aaron, He leads his people like a flock. Like Joshua, He causes them to inherit the promised and purchased possession. Like David, He is not only beloved of the Lord, but all his redeemed are beloved for his sake. Under Him, the true Solomon, we have access to a temple not made with hands, where perpetual atonement and intercession is made for his people. Each and all of the ancient worthies, after reflecting for a moment a ray of the Saviour's glory, and after raising expectation of Him that was to come, having served their day and generation, fell asleep, but the Sun of Righteousness forever remains the fountain of all excellence, and the accomplishment of every prophecy, with whose glory all the types are blended and unite.

XV. Hence the double origin of the typical character of the Scriptures, proceeding both from Christ being the centre of the Divine revelations; and from the unity of purpose in the Divine mind. Even amongst men we may trace from their first childhood, the progress and history of their intelligence, and in the earliest work of the most original genius, we may discern the germs of those discoveries which are afterwards to advance science, and to make large additions to human knowledge.

But if the mind of man is thus similar to itself, and advances by an expansion of its powers rather than by any addition to them, much more must the counsels of the uncreated mind be forever the same. All things are done by him according to one eternal plan; to speak after the manner of men, that plan is progressively developed, but even in its first disclosure, all parts of the plan are perfect,

and observe their due proportions. This is the case in nature and in all natural productions. "Nature," as Lord Bacon has observed, "does not proceed as a statuary in forming a statue." "Rudimenta partium omnium simul parit et producit." "She throws out altogether and at once the whole system of every being, and the rudiments of all the parts." The vegetable or the animal, as Lord Bolingbroke justly observes, in commenting upon the passage, "grows in bulk and increases in strength, but it is *the same from the first.*"

But not only is each individual the same in its plan from the beginning, but the same design runs through series of plants and animals, and embraces the whole chain of existence. Every plant, every animal, every creature, is a link in the complex harmony of existence; a recollection of the past, and a presentiment of the future —a bond which, while it unites the higher and the lower forms of being, connects that which immediately precedes with that which is about to follow.

But, though we speak of the connections of beings as of a chain, they are not one chain, but many intersections, which are continually crossing each other, ever meeting and re-uniting as they ascend upwards to the accomplishment and fulfilment of the sum of existence. Nothing interrupts the unity of the divine platform of creation; though worlds be destroyed, the new creations link in and are connected with former and departed being. The new race of creatures that inhabit the renovated earth, form a continuous series with the organic remains of the world that was previously destroyed; they may be more expanded, more multiplied, and more varied; still they are the prolonged evolution of the same inexhaustible plan.

It is thus that nature abounds in types, shadows, and pre-intimations of the future. In world after world we trace a gradual approximation to some distinct type of

being ; thus from the first pachydermata what a lengthened and continuous series to the tapir, elephant, and rhinoceros of " the world which now is !"

But it is not only in animated forms that this series and these types are conspicuous, but even in the changes of the elements, and the processes of universal nature. Crystallization is a type of vegetation ; and vegetation of animal life ; and what a prolonged series of phenomena connect combustion with respiration, the material fire without and the hidden fire that burns within us, the secret and transient flame of life !

Still more evidently in the history of man than in the history of nature is the recurrence of the one universal plan apparent. The same cycles of moral retribution occur again and again ; the same virtues meet with similar rewards, and the same vices draw down the same merited punishment. In the history of ancestors we read the history of their remote descendants. The fancy of the recommencing series of existences is realized, and the great moral year seems ever to return. And if in history we trace this unity of plan and gradual development, in religion it is yet more strikingly displayed. The whole of Revelation is contained as in its germ in the first divine declaration after the fall of man in the denunciation to the serpent. " I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." All the rest of the Bible is a continued expansion and fulfilment of this primal promise. In a revelation which is gradual and progressive, it is plain that each discovery must be both retrospective and prospective, and that all the parts being fitted in to each other, each must not only have a relation, but a resemblance to the whole. But, above all, every thing in the transitory dispensation of the Jews is professedly typical, and is instituted not so much for its own

intrinsic worth as from its likeness to some future event. Among other nations, institutions are commemorative; among the Jews they were also prophetic. It is thus that they can never lose their interest; they are not limited to a definite portion of time; like their Divine Author, they embrace the present and future as well as the past.

XVI. As the unity of God gives unity to the Scriptures; so his eternity and immutability confer upon them perpetuity. "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it, and God doeth it that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been." Nothing relating to the Scriptures is of a transient nature, their perpetual accomplishment, their promises and their threatenings ever fulfilling, yet ever to be fulfilled, make the interest which belongs to them eternal as well as universal. Every thing earthly must decay, "for all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." The Scriptures are not only true but truth itself, as they reveal the Divine character, which is the root and ground of all other reality in existence. It is owing to his permanence that all nature is not a fleeting and vanishing stream, forever flowing and forever passing away. It is owing to God's immutability that divine truth is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. Nor when the predictions of Scripture shall have received their final accomplishment in the close of God's dispensations to this world, will they thereby suffer any diminution of their interest, for what is historical in the conduct of the Divine Being must also continue to be forever prophetic. It is thus that a fact in philosophy becomes a perpetual pre-intimation. The experience of yesterday becomes the foresight of our after life; and the same im-

perishable laws, amidst all the apparent changes which are diversifying the scenery around us, maintain the same order through nature, and govern, though unseen, the world.

PART III.

FALL OF MAN.

1. Two views of Human Nature. 2. Man not his own Judge. 3. The Divine Law. 4. God's Judgment. 5. Adam in Paradise. 6. The Deluge. 7. The Postdiluvians. 8. The Jews. 9. The Reception of the Saviour. 10. The Reception of Christianity. 11. The Prevalence of Evil admitted. 12 The Opposers of the Doctrine of the Fall of Man. 13. Imitation of Evil, and transmitted Depravity. 14. Difficulties. 15. Difficulties become Proofs. 16. Religion Natural and Revealed. 17. Revelation adapted to the condition of Man.

I. Having considered the proofs on which revelation is founded, and the internal structure of revelation when viewed within itself, the next inquiry is, what is the present state of man, to whom that revelation is addressed?

Two views have been taken of human nature, the one favorable, the other the reverse. The first considers the mind of man as "a sheet of white paper," capable of receiving impressions, but itself without any innate impression or bias; well disposed to whatever is right, as being agreeable to its nature, and conducive to its interests, but, from its very susceptibility, liable to receive impulses of evil as well as of good, and easily led astray by example; yet, when undeceived, recovering itself by the force of its own native rectitude; expanding itself to the sun of truth, and flourishing beneath the smile of Heaven. A pleasant theory, and willingly to be received, if it were not at vari-

ance with the testimony of conscience, the express declarations of God, and the perpetual tenor of human affairs.

The other view of human nature represents man in more gloomy colors; as a creature indeed adapted to a higher state of being, with powers that find no adequate sphere of action here below; but who, far from aspiring after that high end, or lamenting his present low condition, clings to his chains, and to his prison house. An exile, and in love with banishment; a winged creature, according to Plato, with moulting wings, who yet would rather creep than soar; and who, born for the glorious freedom which God bestows upon his sons, is willing to remain in bondage to sin and death.

II. It might be no difficult matter to decide between these two jarring opinions by the light of reason alone, or rather the question is already decided by the acknowledged convictions of mankind; and by the admissions of the contending parties themselves; but it is a small thing for man to be judged of man's judgment; "yea," says the apostle, "I judge not mine own self." Human nature cannot be the right judge of itself; it is too much swayed by interest and by fear, by self-love and self-complacence. The mind cannot escape from itself so as to behold its own nature from an eminence, and at a distance. When the accused becomes also his own judge, the sentence he passes must be both partial and lenient. Nor is man, when judging of himself, blinded by self-interest alone, but by the very darkness which his vices have created. There is an awful law of his nature which casts a deep veil over his eyes; the most guilty have the least sense of guilt. Conscience is the finest and most fugitive part of our being. Man during his life is in a state of probation, yet before this life ends, his probation may be virtually terminated. Conscience, often opposed, may at length become silent, and man may continue to sin without being

conscious of sinning, till his career of iniquity is closed; till his passions can no longer be satiated; till nothing remains to him but the past, and of the past nothing but remorse — that worm within us which never dies.

God alone can be the judge of man; he has made and he observes all his springs of action; he looks through his nature, and its inmost operations. Men, when judging each other, can only judge of actions and divine their motives, and of these actions they are most affected by their results, as contributing to human happiness or misery; but God has a perpetual and unerring rule of judgment in his own eternal laws, which are the expression of his everlasting will. These laws, by which all human creatures must finally be judged, are the only test of the merit and demerit of rational agents, and from the revealed will and express declarations of God, we alone can learn what sentence to pass upon ourselves, and upon our fellow men.

III. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

What God requires of his creatures is therefore love, supreme love to himself and love to all his creation. Tried by this rule, it is evident that the whole of mankind come immeasurably short of the glory of God. Far from loving God supremely, they do not even "like to retain God in their knowledge," but have invented for themselves deities and religions the very opposite of the true God and of his spiritual worship. The state of religion in the ancient world is a sufficient index of the state of man.

They must be ignorant, indeed, of the law by which we are to be tried, who could doubt for a moment of the fallen

condition of mankind. Indeed, if love to God were alone considered as the rule, the question would be acknowledged by all as decided. The alienation of the mind from God, or at least its forgetfulness of him, is too great to escape the notice of the most superficial observer, and love to God being the centre of morality, the source from which love to our neighbor should proceed, the want of it is a sufficient evidence that man is a depraved and fallen creature.

But however deficient in love towards God, it is frequently believed that man abounds in natural benevolence towards his fellow men, that his first and native feelings prompt him to desire the welfare of others, and that under the second head of the law man could stand the test of a severe examination when not corrupted by evil customs, or by a selfishness derived from evil example. And so many parts of human nature are wisely formed to co-operate in promoting the welfare of society, that much may be urged on this partial view of the question, though it is to be regretted that most of the kindly feelings of men are instinctive rather than rational, and natural more than moral. Though man is certainly not a malevolent creature, it is but too clear that he is ready in many instances to sacrifice the happiness of others not only to his interest, but even to his passions.

There is no need, however, for inquiring as to the degrees of benevolence or selfishness existing at any period in different individuals or in different forms of society; the great question is not in what relation does man stand to his fellow men, but what is his condition in the eyes of his holy and all-seeing Judge? Now it is manifest, he comes infinitely short of that pure and holy law of love, according to which all intelligent creatures must stand or fall at the bar of the Almighty, and having

broken the law he is subject also to its penalty, the loss of the favor of God, and consequently of life, for "in God's favor is life," the only life worthy of the name.

The law of God is simply the will of God, and his will is the holiness of his nature; as his nature is unchangeable so is his will, and so are his laws. It is thus in vain to suppose that the commandments of God can bend, or relax from their infinite purity; like their author they are the "same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

Very different from the true law of God are those imaginary moral laws which men shape out for themselves, which either accommodate their rigor to the sinful weaknesses of fallen creatures, or are considered as temporary, promulgated for some particular object or end, and transitory as the partial dispensations with which they are connected. There are two sects, the Pharisee and the Antinomian, which are continually appearing, (not, indeed, under the same names, but at least with similar principles,) and who, though they seem to oppose each other vehemently, yet agree in many essential particulars; both are ignorant of the true law of God, and instead of the divine and eternal rule, substitute a chimera of their own, differing widely from the infinity and excellency of God's commandments.

The Pharisee, though he pretends to be justified by the works of the law, yet it is merely by fulfilling a rule of his own invention, which comes as far short of the divine law as the formality of a self-righteous sinner does of the infinite purity of God. He seeks after righteousness, "as it were," by the deeds of the law; his, indeed, is but a mere pretence, it is not the divine righteousness, but his own righteousness which he goes about to establish.

The Antinomian is in still deeper and more palpable error, while he dreams of the law being done away by the death of Christ; he might as well dream that the divine

existence is done away by the death of Christ! No folly can be equal to his folly, no immorality can be compared to his turpitude, who turns the doctrine of salvation from sin into liberty to commit sin, and seeks by the death of Christ, (and an impunity falsely deduced from it,) to overturn that law, to establish which in its eternal and divine holiness Christ led a life of suffering and died a shameful death.

Though the universal law, as it is identical with the will of God, can admit of no changes, yet the extent to which it is revealed may admit of many additions, and the manner in which it is proposed, may admit of many modifications. Particular laws may be partial discoveries of God's will, and a later commandment may abrogate a former, by being a more full disclosure of the Divine mind. Thus the term law, has various significations in Scripture; sometimes it is taken in its most general and absolute sense for the revelation of the Divine will; sometimes for the disclosure of that will by the light of reason and conscience; sometimes for the law of Moses in general, whether moral or ceremonial; and it is often confined to the ceremonial ritual itself, which was from its very nature transitory, because shadowy and typical of that which was to come.

The law of Moses was not given as a law of life to beings who had the will and moral power of working out their own salvation, but it was given to fallen creatures, to convince them of sin, and to lead them to see the necessity of an atonement and purification. Thus the law of Moses is prohibitive rather than imperative, it inculcates indeed what ought to be done, but more frequently what ought not to be done, in order that the Jews being convicted of sin, upon each breach of the moral law, might have recourse to the ceremonial law, and by means of types might anticipate the great atonement to come, and

lay hold on that Divine righteousness which was yet to be fully revealed.

But though the law of Moses is transitory in its form, it is enduring in its substance; Christ came "not to destroy the law but fulfil the law." The smallest part of that Divine commandment has more of a necessary existence than the fabric of the heavens. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." The whole of the material world is not an end but a mean, and has no excellence in itself except as relative to its intended use. It is but the scaffolding of creation, the destined abodes of life and intelligence. When that life is ended, and that intelligence perfected, these abodes might be swept away without leaving a blank, and the whole of the visible heavens might disappear, having served the end for which they were created; but every part of God's moral law partakes of his unchangeable holiness, and his immutable character; it is as eternal as the Divine Being himself.

IV. But in the Scriptures we have not only the rule by which God judges his creatures, and by which every one may judge himself; we have likewise the judgments which he passes upon men according to that rule. All, indeed, are condemned by the simple declaration of the law, but if any doubt could possibly remain, that doubt must be dispelled, by hearing from the mouth of God, the infallible and irreversible doom passed upon all flesh. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Thus the whole human race, at that time existing, were shut up, as it were in prison, awaiting impending judgment; there was only one exception, and that one possessed not merit of his own to recommend him, he found favor and mercy with God. Again, when God "looked down from heaven upon the children of men," there was no change in his judgment respecting them, "as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The apostle Paul, by bringing forward these and many more charges, proves, that all, whether Jews or Gentiles, are concluded under sin, and obnoxious to "the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," that thus "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

God not only knows man, and that through all the recesses of his nature, but makes man known to himself. The glory of the Divine character manifested in the Scriptures makes sin by the contrast exceedingly sinful, and suffers it no longer to be hidden. Each reader of the Scriptures, if he read them with understanding, must exclaim with the prophet when beholding Jehovah in his temple, "unclean, unclean." Indeed the very notion of a revelation implies ignorance, if not guilt; it probably implies much more; a change in man from the condition in which he was created. An extraordinary provision presupposes new and urgent necessity, and thus revelation, which is an addition to the light of nature, shows man has fallen from the state in which he was guided by that light alone, and that enfeebled and degraded he requires aid in proportion to his present exigencies.

But be that as it may, no one can open the Bible without being struck with the testimony which it everywhere bears to the guilt and danger of mankind. All its contents are perpetually occupied about salvation and atonement, and whom does salvation concern but those that are in danger? And who have need of atonement but those who are stained with sin? Every portion of Scripture would be unintelligible and absurd if not addressed to a lost and miserable race. It speaks of escape from punishment, of a way for the wanderer, of comfort to the afflicted, of immortality to the dying. It describes that primitive state from which men have fallen, and again it holds forth renovation and restoration. It declares the enmity of the heart to God, and offers the means of reconciliation with him. Thus from the first glance at the Scriptures, to the full understanding of them as a system, the prevalence of evil is everywhere pointed out implicitly or explicitly, and is suggested by the very turn of the language in every mode of address to mankind.

But it is not only by the divine declarations, though these are sufficiently explicit, that we learn the point of view in which man is beheld by his Maker, and the relation in which he stands to him, but by the uniform tenor of the divine conduct towards the human race. Mankind have been placed in a variety of situations, and under every diversity of trial; the assistances that have been afforded them are as numerous as the temptations they have had to resist. No generation has been placed exactly in the same situation as the preceding one, and no day in a man's life, as Solon has remarked, is exactly like another. Yet this diversity of trial is attended with a uniformity of result, all have come short of the glory of God—all have been visited with marks of his displeasure. Sin has everywhere prevailed, and where sin may have been concealed, yet the consequences of sin are obvious, and

the human race are universally delivered over to the punishers of sin, labor, disease, and death. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

V. God created all things good, and still that original tendency to good is manifest in the first design of our frame, though the tendency to evil overcomes it in our practice. The Platonic remark was just, that whenever we apply ourselves to what is right, we have the current of general nature, if not of our own nature, in our favor. The laws by which the world is governed are all on the side of virtue. How great then must be the depravity of our inclinations, by which all those better tendencies are overpowered, and by which that which is evil becomes easy of attainment to us, while that which is good is not only difficult, but requires constant exertion, and is altogether against the bent of our dispositions!

> "Non aliter, quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
> Remigiis subigit, si brachia forte remisit,
> Atque illum in præceps prono rapit alveus amni."

But Adam was created without any of this bias to the wrong; nature within him, and nature without him, were all conspiring to lead him to the service of his Creator, and to the observance of his laws. Though all the creation had received the divine blessing, and was pronounced "very good," yet beautiful and happy as was the whole world, it was not deemed a meet residence for its new formed master, but he was placed in Eden, in the fairest spot of the earth, in a garden planted by the Lord God, and full of the shadows and similitudes of "a better country, even an heavenly," which he would have attained had he not broken the one commandment which was given to him.

All things in Eden were typical of heaven; we see this by the heavenly state being set forth in language borrowed

from the description of the earthly paradise; and here man had the way of life and the way of death placed before him, in the tree of life and in the tree of death, that tree of prohibition by which he knew good and evil, since absolute good and evil can be known to so limited a being as man, only by the intimations of the divine will. All around Adam was good, evil had but one entrance, the breaking of the divine command. Then, if ever, life could have been gained by keeping the law, but the law was broken, and sin entered the world, with death, that a stain might be cast upon all human glory, and that man should thenceforth look to a righteousness above his own, even to a divine fulfilment of the law.

When Adam fell, all fell with him; then our destiny, as far as human help could go, was decided. Eden was lost, and Heaven was lost; not to him alone, but to the human race who were involved in his success and ruin.

The loss of the garden of Eden was typical of the loss of the heavenly life, and of the favor of God. That garden is to be distinguished from Eden, the country in which it was placed. 1. The whole region on the banks of the Lower Euphrates, from its beauty, had been named the region of Eden, or Delight; its climate remains the same, adapted to the fairest productions of the earth, but the Euphrates no longer fertilizes its now barren sands, owing to the usual changes in the bed of a river. Even in that delicious region a favored spot had been selected, a garden which was fenced by God himself, watered and watched over by him every moment.

All this was forfeited by Adam, and he was banished into the wilderness of this world, and debarred from daily communion with his Maker, whose delights were no longer continually with the sons of men, but who now left this earth under a curse which he had formerly blessed. Even the image of God was defaced in man; conformity to the

Divine likeness consists in conformity to the Divine will; but man was now led by a will of his own diverse from the author of nature, and he communicated his changed and darkened nature to his descendants, who no longer entering the world with the clear impress of the Divine character, were born after the wretched likeness of their fallen progenitor. Thus in the history of Adam there is a hand-writing still more legible and ominous against mankind, than those characters which foreshewed Belshazzar his doom. Man in his best estate, and human nature with him, has been weighed in the balance of God's holiness and found wanting, his moral dominion is taken from him, and the sceptre is given to one who is to come, and who shall reign in righteousness, ages without end.

VI. The history of mankind from the fall to the deluge, is but the expansion and unfolding of the evil heart of unbelief, the principle of defection and rebellion in man. There we see sin reigning, and death, the consequence of sin. As men increase, transgressions abound, hand joins in hand, and the bias to evil strengthened by union and example, unites in one stream of corruption, and forces its way against every obstacle.

They were all under sentence of death for the transgression of their first ancestor, but the very forbearance of God, which delayed to each individual the execution of that sentence for nearly a thousand years, seemed to give new strength to their impiety; "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." While the long-suffering of God was accounted slackness, the men of violence hastened to inflict the divine sentence upon each other. They had wars, without the pretexts which straitness of territory has subsequently furnished. For it would appear from various considerations, that so far from feeling the pressure of over population, mankind

before the flood had not left their original seats, nor were spread over the world as the postdiluvians after their dispersion from the Tower of Babel, but still remained in the favored climes of the east. They seem to have subsisted by agriculture rather than pasturage, and were of course more thickly congregated together than the pastoral descendants of Noah—they were undistinguished by any marked diversity of tongues, and appear by the names which they bore to have used the same primitive speech, living together as one immense nation, though convulsed with continual civil wars.

There were giants in those days, men of great strength and enterprise, if not of disproportioned stature, and their monuments were gigantic also, if we may judge by the cast of architecture probably communicated from them to the postdiluvians, whose earliest undertakings are strongly characterized by the simple, the enduring, and the sublime. But their names have perished, though their renown survives, unappropriated to any individuals. Their works and even their crimes have failed to designate these "wicked men of old which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood," and all that remains of them is anonymous fame.

Yet even in the midst of abounding iniquity, God left not himself without witness; there were those who called themselves by his name, and who distinguished themselves from the seed of evil doers, by adhering to his service. Even these, however, only afford a stronger proof of the weakness and misery of man's condition. Far from bringing over the world to the truth, they went over to the world, and became partakers of its iniquity. Enoch, who pre-eminently walked with God, was "taken from the evil to come," translated from a world which God had cursed; and the history of the whole antediluvian Church is similar to that of Enoch, "they were not, for God took them,"

and removed them to a better state. Thus was the earth ripe for destruction, both from the filling up of the measure of its own sin, and from the ceasing of the intercessory prayers of the saints, who were gathered to their rest. Still God raised up a preacher of righteousness in Noah, and appointed a hundred and twenty years as the final term of repentance ; but his preaching produced no fruits, the hearts of his hearers were "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," and he saved but himself and his family.

Yet these ancient rebels were men of like passions with ourselves, in them we may trace our own lineaments. Like us they strove with God's Spirit, though under a darker dispensation, like us they misunderstood his long suffering ; and the view which God took of them when "he looked upon the earth, and, behold it was corrupt ; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth," is applicable to man in all ages, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and the same principle of departure from God ever produces the same bitter fruits, and in the same degree, as far as occasion and temptation serve to bring them to maturity, whenever the Divine Spirit ceases to strive with man.

The antediluvians are at once a monument of the depravity of the human character, and of the destruction that waits upon iniquity. Divine vengeance may be slow, but it is certain, universal, and irremediable ; "all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

VII. The stain of inveterate sin was not to be washed away by all the waters of the ocean. That root of bitterness which had sprung up and overshadowed the old world, had still, though cut down and reduced to its stock, the full principle of vitality within it. Even in the small

family of Noah we see the beginning of a new defection from God, and a new curse entailed, which proved that though God would not again destroy the earth with water, yet he would visit sin with punishment even in this world.

The threatened wrath of God, and the example of a world destroyed, were found insufficient after the flood to deter men from similar crimes. The history of the first postdiluvians has indeed passed away, and nothing remains of them but names without circumstances; but they have immortalized their own apostacy by the idols which they invented, and the temples which they subsequently reared. Not being able to unite themselves under a common head, and their attempt having failed to rear up a tower to the heavens (which was probably intended to be dedicated to the heavens) they were scattered over the earth while yet in the pastoral state, one wave after another of shepherds pressing each other forwards to the extremities of the world. They were thus dissimilar from the antediluvians, who, settled and agricultural, remained around their parent seats, spreading only with the steady and regular progress of a civilized population, such as we see in the United States at the present moment; and far different from the rapidity with which bands of herdsmen migrate with their cattle and their portable dwellings beyond ranges of mountains, and wide spreading steppes.

But whether stationary or migratory, they departed widely from the knowledge of the true God. One generation after another sank in deeper darkness, and if they did not attain to the same height of impiety with the antediluvians, it was owing to their dispersed and feebler condition, and to their shortened term of life. They were debarred from a rapid progress in the arts by their early dispersion, and had to toil for the bare necessaries of subsistence in lands where the curse had taken full effect, and where man, in the sweat of his brow, had to contend

with the thorns and the thistles which had previous possession of the soil.

While the nations were forsaking him, God, as in after times, seems to have withdrawn the knowledge of himself slowly, raising up tokens, and remembrances of his goodness, in the midst of prevailing defection, and while the heavens and the seasons were proclaiming his greatness and his loving kindness, they wanted not human messengers, to give a more pointed intimation of his will. Such was Melchizedek king of Salem, priest of the most high God, in a land overrun with idolatry and vice; nor were immediate communications from heaven denied, as we see by the book of Job. In the silence of darkness, by dreams and visions of the night, God made his will known, and by the visitations of holy ones and angels, to shepherds keeping their watch upon the lonely hills. Vestiges and recollections of this state of man we may perceive in the Scriptures, and traditions of it even down to the time of Homer. But age after age, the light of Divine truth grew fainter and fainter, and the defection became as universal as that of the former world. Here and there a few scattered individuals might maintain the true worship, but these remains of early illumination would, in the natural course of things, soon have been quenched by the prevailing darkness.

It was thus evidenced that human nature was diseased; no age, no condition, no country was free from the taint of depravity. The new world was under the same influence as the old, wherever life was transmitted, sin was transmitted along with it. But when the last lights of the patriarchal religion were going out, God called a second Noah in the person of Abraham, to become a witness of the truth in the midst of a world which was rapidly departing from it; no longer, however, to foretell the destruction of the world, but the salvation of the world. He had

placed his bow in the clouds as a sign, and he was mindful of his covenant that he should no more destroy the earth with water, not on account of human depravity being lessened, but because now the typical and propitiatory atonements of sacrifices were perpetually presented; and when the established sacrifice was offered by Noah, it is said, "and the Lord smelled a savour of rest, (or atonement) and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; though the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done."

VIII. In the midst of prevailing apostacy and degeneracy, God has always separated to himself a peculiar people, however few their numbers may sometimes have been.

In the antediluvian world, the sons of God were set apart, and distinguished by that glorious title. Then Noah was selected as a preacher of righteousness, and as the father of a new race. Afterwards Abraham was chosen, and separated from all the tribes of men, not by the intervening waters of a deluge, or by the destruction of all in whose nostrils was the breath of life; but by a moral interval placed between him and his kindred and country, he became as one, who, dead to his former life, and severed from the land and friends of his youth, had departed to another world. Like every other believer, he began a new existence, under the immediate guidance of God, living in the hope of a future and better inheritance. He and his descendants were both sojourners and strangers. They had no other occupation of the soil than the altars which they builded, and the wells which they digged. They were strangers in the land, living apart from its inhabitants, with other maxims, and far other views. All the rites that were assigned to them had this purpose in view, to keep them a distinct and singular race.

Nor were all the seed of Abraham chosen; the principle of separation and selection was as much manifested among his descendants themselves, as among the nations from whom they had been taken, and as among the generations before the flood. Of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac alone was chosen to be the father of the promised seed, and of the two sons of Isaac, the birthright was given to the younger. Thus the husbandmen in Virgil found no other way to preserve the excellency of their seed, than to select, year after year, from the heaps of their threshing floor, the grains which they destined to give rise to the future harvest.

> "Vidi lecta diu, et multo spectata labore,
> "Degenerare tamen, ni vis humana quotannis
> "Maxima quaeque manu legeret; sic omnia fatis
> "In pejus ruere, ac retro sublapsa referri."

When the descendants of Jacob were thus chosen and set apart, so as "not to be reckoned among the nations," a new proof of man's degeneracy was given amidst the continued carefulness with which they were secluded and guarded. Human nature, apart from evil example, and surrounded by every advantage, is still the same, ever drawn by "an evil heart of unbelief to depart from the living God." The other descendants of Abraham and of Isaac followed the fate of the other nations. For a time the knowledge of the true God was kept up among them. They possessed the advantage of divine communications and eminent examples of holiness. Men like Job were raised up out of the midst of them, a spectacle not only to men, but to the angels who kept not their first estate.

But those examples were lost upon the multitude after the example of the first postdiluvians, tribe after tribe withdrew from the worship of the one true God to serve dumb idols; and in Balaam, probably one of the last who, out of the line of Israel, received divine communications,

we see an example of men tampering with that inspired knowledge which was about to be withdrawn from them; and endeavoring to make a gain of the form of godliness, when its spirit was passing away.

The Israelites were more highly favored, and, though continually forsaking their God, were not suffered utterly to revolt. With a high hand and an out-stretched arm, he rescued them not only from their enemies, but from their willing bondage to idolatry and to corruption. He carried them into the desert apart from the contaminating example of other nations, and by the institutions he gave them, he secluded them yet more widely than by the wilderness, from the customs and the familiar intercourse of other people; but still the indigenous weeds of the soil sprung up, the same vices and the same alienation of mind prevailed among them, only more aggravated by their better opportunities of instruction. The light that shone upon them only proved that they loved darkness better than light, because their deeds were evil. The divine conduct towards the Israelites and their murmurings against him in the desert, have held up an example and a mirror to all succeeding ages, of the goodness, and of the severity of God, and also of that dark and troubled fountain of bitterness in the human heart which never ceases to flow till its waters are healed by divine grace.

That righteous generation, who conquered the promised land, and who, believing in God's promises, did enter into rest, to them it still was said, "ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God, he is a jealous God." And what a continual departure there was among their descendants, the whole history of their judges shows. Though there was a great revival in the time of Samuel, and David, and Solomon, which had a gleam of the glory of the latter days, when the prophetic and the kingly offices were established, and when the church of God had had a fore-

taste of the future reign of the Son of Man ; still the glory was but shadowy and evanescent; and Israel was separated from the Lord who had called them, and from the land he had given them ; and Judah, departing from God, was wasted away.

When the remnant had returned from the Babylonish captivity, the same principle of rejection and selection was again displayed as in the days of Jacob, of Abraham and of Noah ; the ten tribes remained cast off, and of the multitude of Judah the greater part returned no more to their native land. And though of the small number who were replaced in Palestine more good is spoken, and the prophet declares glad tidings to them, still the majority had but a form of godliness, denying the power thereof, and when the Messiah came "as a refiner's fire," though many of the sons of Levi and of Judah were "purged as gold and silver," yet the majority of the nation were cast away as dross, and but a remnant was saved.

IX. But above all, the evil of human nature is manifested by the reception which the Saviour met with when he entered the world, bringing with him life and immortality. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not ; he came unto his own, and his own received him not." Though the Jewish nation were consecrated for the express purpose of keeping the oracles that related to his advent, of perpetuating the types which prefigured the great work of salvation, and though they were that favored nation "of whom, as concerning the flesh," the Messiah was to spring, and all whose hopes centered on the coming of their glorious king, yet such is the enmity of the human mind, that when they saw him who was the image of God, they despised and rejected, hated and persecuted and slew him. Though the glory of the Godhead beamed from his character, and though he spake as never man

spake, even the words of eternal wisdom; they looked upon him as one who was mad and had a devil.

Notwithstanding their blindness, they were a sample of human nature placed in no unfavorable state; they were instructed from their childhood in the sacred writings which are able to make men wise unto salvation; they made their boast of keeping the pure and holy law of God, and rested all their hopes on the promised Messiah and the kingdom he was about to establish.

All things seemed prepared for the reception of the Saviour, except the heart of man. "The desire of all nations came." "The Lord whom they sought suddenly came to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant they delighted in." "The king of Zion came, just, and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass," but a spiritual Messiah, and a spiritual kingdom, blasted all their dreams of glory and withered their very soul. They immediately proved, "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," and that the sons of Adam, unless born again, with new affections and desires, will ever be rebellious and hostile to the most gracious designs of God.

Every thing connected with the Saviour proclaimed the fallen state of man. John, the herald of the Messiah, who came to prepare the way of the Lord, preached repentance, or a change of mind, to all who would become members of the kingdom of heaven. Baptism, the rite by which the polluted leper, when healed, was re-admitted into the congregation of the Lord, was the expressive sign chosen, by which all who received his word entered into the society of believers. The Messiah came as a light to those who had long sat in darkness, as a deliverer to those who had long pined as the wretched thralls of sin, he came to invite all to partake of the waters of life, he came not to those that were whole but to those that were

sick, he proclaimed himself "the way and the truth and the life;" the only way by which we can escape final misery; the truth, for all else is benighted in error, the only life for those who are born children of wrath and subject to eternal death.

"Why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, that is God?" In replying to the question, "what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the Saviour at once determined the condition of the human race, and his own character. He was pre-eminently good; it was to fulfil God's law that he came into the world, a law which had been broken by all mankind, even by those most eminent in piety and virtue. If none were good but One, then all have need of a righteousness wrought out for them by that One, for the divine law cannot pass away unfulfilled. To all it speaks, "if thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments." But since, by the works of the law, no flesh living, none of the fallen race of Adam can be justified, this is the only work that remains to us, even "the work of God, that we believe on him whom he hath sent."

But not only was the same enmity continually displayed against Christ during his life; but still more at his crucifixion and death, do we see man's hatred of the divine character evidenced to the utmost.—The voices which had called hosannah! when they expected some temporal advantage, now in the rage of disappointment and of undisguised hatred, calling out "crucify him, crucify him"—The Lord of life nailed to the accursed tree, both by the Jews and Gentiles—all conspiring to doom him to death who, by his blood, purchased for them eternal life—no voice raised against his unjust sentence—his few and fearful disciples fled—and his enemies alone confident and prevailing during the hour and power of darkness.

X. The depravity of human nature is also abundantly

displayed by the reception which Christianity has met with. Wherever the messengers of mercy and peace appeared, the wretched criminals, to whom they proclaimed pardon and salvation on believing in the Lord Jesus, treated the offered blessings with rage and contempt, reviling the heralds of the gospel as the troublers of the world, thrusting them out of one city, scourging and stoning them out of another, and inflicting bonds and imprisonments upon those whose unwearied labors would have won over a sinful and miserable world to the glorious freedom of the children of God. And when all the cruelty which was inflicted upon individuals seemed ineffectual for rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, one general persecution after another endeavored to obliterate the message of mercy from the minds of men, and to exterminate those witnesses who would make known to their enemies and persecutors the truth and the goodness of God.

When persecution ceased, corruption began. Christianity triumphed over the opposition of its open enemies, but sank under the deceitful friendship of its pretended adherents. The truth of Christianity was victorious over all former systems, but though the understanding of man thus yielded slowly and reluctantly to arguments which it could not refute, the heart of man kept up a contest which could only be terminated by the renovating grace of God. Where the heart was not changed, the truth was changed into a lie, and a false religion was substituted for the true. The name of Christianity remained enthroned in power, and surrounded with the homage of idolatrous multitudes, but true Christianity had retired from public view, persecuted under the name of heresy, and finding no retreat or safety but in the wilderness, apart from the world. So much more dangerous is hollow friendship than avowed hostility, that papal Rome has done far more to root out

genuine religion than pagan Rome. The saints have triumphed over all their other persecutors, but popery has had this privilege granted to it, that it alone should wear out the saints of the Most High till the destined period of its spiritual tyranny is expired.

Even when there was a great earthquake, and when one-tenth of the mystic Babylon fell, and when a portion of the children of the Christian captivity had returned to worship the God of their fathers, no longer bowing down to idols of wood and of stone, the same enmity in the mind of man to the divine purity of the truth again showed itself, and with still deeper and more refined cruelty. The persecutions of the Roman emperors seem mild in comparison of the dark, deliberate, and fiend-like malice of the inquisition. The whole history of popery indeed is one continued proof of the darkness of man's understanding, and the depravity of his heart.

The Reformation, on the other hand, was destined to exhibit how transitory the influence of good is, how foreign to this earth, and to the human mind, how soon those who professed the reformed doctrines were to depart from its principles, and how partial were to be revivals of the Reformation among those who emulated the zeal, the courage, and the doctrines of the first reformers.

While multitudes have hitherto rejected God, and have been rejected of him, as the due reward of their unbelief, a remnant has been saved according to the election of grace. As when "the lot was cast into the lap" before the Lord, a tribe was taken out of the nation, and a family out of the tribe; so in the old time a world was rejected, and Noah alone was taken. The kindreds of the earth again were set aside, and Abraham was taken. The descendants of Abraham were set aside and Jacob was taken. Of Israel, first the ten tribes, then the two tribes were cast away, and a remnant only were saved.

Of that remnant the majority were excluded, and the elect of the Jews were joined to the elect of the Gentiles, that both might become one new people.

Soon the Christian church departed from God in a more gross manner than even the Jewish church had done, and when a dew of refreshing from on high fell again upon the earth, not all who were named by the name of Christ were revived by it, a remnant only were saved; and when that dying flame is rekindled, it is but partially and occasionally, and where it burns brightest it is but feeble, and has often appeared to be fading away. Thus the alienation of the mind from God is evidenced by proofs only too abundant. May God of his goodness give us equally numerous and convincing proofs of the power of his transforming grace in multitudes being renewed after the image of God, and in the completion of those promises which predict the glory of the latter days.

XI. The fallen condition of man is not only placed in every various light throughout the Scriptures, but has been acknowledged by men in every age and country. It is deeply impressed upon the various systems of mythology, it is wrought into the ground work of polity and government, and continually engraved on the page of history, forming also the common topic of declamation, and the tritest and ever recurring theme of poetry.

It has been remarked by an infidel writer, that if God originally formed man in the Divine image, man in return has made gods to himself after the human image; and what that image is, the imaginary heavens of paganism, and the beings by which they are tenanted, too abundantly show. No other proof is necessary; in mythology alone we have incontrovertible evidence of how low man has sunk. Whatever was polluted, whatever was atrocious, was deified, not by one nation, but wherever men shaped out a religion for themselves. And where could mankind

find the original of these hateful objects of idolatry but in their own minds, and in their own hearts. These deities were but the shadows of their worshippers magnified and reflected back to them from the heavens.

Not only in mythology, but in traditions and fable, we find the confessions of the crimes and punishments of mankind. Everywhere we meet with broken, and it may be distorted rumors of the deluge, or of some other catastrophe almost universal, which had nearly exterminated the ancient race who peopled the earth. And there are recollections which ascend still higher to the time when man lived in a state of innocence, and of delight, before he had forfeited the favor of heaven, and been driven forth to his present abodes of exile and misery.

In the religious rites of all nations, we have a perpetual and universal confession of sin, for of what do they consist but of sacrifice and atonement, where the innocent victim dies instead of the guilty offerer, and where the guilt and punishment is transferred to the head of the sacrifice. And not the great rite of sacrifice only, but all the various ceremonies of lustration and expiation, however disguised and diversified by superstition, equally imply pollution on the part of the worshipper.

The depravity of human nature is also recognized in the origin and institution of all governments. Had they been instituted among beings whose rule of life was the law of love, all their arrangements would have tended, not to ward off evil, of which there could have been no dread, but by the force of moral union, and of the accumulated contributions of multitudes, to secure an amount of well-being, (the property of each and of all,) greater than could be attained by the efforts of individuals, however benevolent, when acting without mutual co-operation. But far different is the constitution of governments, as far as they have existed among mankind down to the present day;

their first object is not the attainment of good, but the prevention of evil; their primary design, being security of person and of property against the unprincipled selfishness and cruelty which it is the continual aim of men congregating in society to repel, though other ends have been subsequently proposed, and the attainment of positive good has been in some degree united to the warding off of injuries.

Nor is the theory of the rise of governments more favorable to human nature than their actual constitution; the imaginary pictures which are drawn of the human race, previous to the social state, represent men, when without any external restraint, and free from the coercion of law, as living in the commission of every vice, and without even the knowledge, as without the observance of virtue. And though the unsocial state have no foundation in reality, still the colors in which it is drawn, show what is the representation which man naturally forms of himself when unrestrained by the curbing and repressive force of society, and also what were the current traditions concerning the earliest periods of the world. So much is evil interwoven in human affairs, that not only the institutions of a country, but even its monuments, its public buildings, private edifices and inclosures, all attest the existence of violence or injustice, and bear witness to the character of men.

History, which it is almost trite to remark, is often but a mere catalogue of crimes, is acknowledged to give no favorable view of human nature; but it is supposed that the quiet virtues love the shade, that the characters about whom history is chiefly concerned are the turbulent and ambitious, who press forward without restraint of principle to seize the glittering ensigns of power, and that it is not from public transactions but from private life, that we must take our estimate of the degree of virtue prevalent in

any particular age. But if all, or the most who are possessed of any influence or eminence, are allowed to be corrupt, it is a sufficient admission how little strength there is in mankind to resist temptation; and to say that private life is more friendly to virtue than exalted stations, is merely to acknowledge that men are virtuous when they have little temptation to the contrary.

Of all the motives that lead to public action, the least influence is to be ascribed either to the love of God or to the love of man. A historian would have but few readers who should impute, even in a small degree, any of the springs of political movement to either. Most of those to whom Providence permits the conduct and the government of nations, resemble that "unjust judge" who "neither feared God nor regarded man," and their actions are regulated by pretended reasons of state, by designs of public or of private aggrandizement, by ambition, by indolence, by the humor of the moment, far more than by any better motive.

The orators who fulminated over Greece knew too well the bent of the hearts they had to work upon, to make love to our fellow men the prevailing topic of their eloquence; on the contrary, hatred for the nations that opposed their designs of ambition, and love of self, which would rather shed torrents of blood than forego a preeminence however unjustly obtained, were the topics which gave wings and lightning to their eloquence, and without which it would have fallen to the ground innocuous, and failed to strike its mark.

The common-places of poetry are employed in lamenting the paucity of good men, and of all quotations from the poets, those are the tritest which express the propensity of the mind to evil.

"Video meliora proboque
"Deteriora sequor,"

while it is the echo of the expression of St. Paul, "the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do," has been perpetually cited, with many others of the same import, merely because it responds to the consciousness of all men; whether living in the darkness of paganism or in the light of revelation. Poetry, whether epic or tragic, comic or satiric, subsists upon the vices of men, or their consequent punishments, and virtue and simplicity of manners are consigned over to Utopia and to pastorals, though even the language of the Arcadians too frequently savors of anything rather than of the state of innocence.

There is one work that is much wanted, but it would require the hand of a master. A moral picture of the world. A work which would give the image of man's condition in different ages, and in the different stages of his moral existence, presenting his virtues and his vices, his happiness and his misery, pointing out his motives and springs of action, and ascertaining the degree of moral twilight in which successive generations lived, till the day star rose upon the more favored portions of the earth. A work which should place before the eye of the reader—the savage of the wilderness, and the barbarians of the north and of the south; the stupid and deliberate cruelty of the Scythian—the thirst for blood of the Arab—the vengeful eye of the Errif and of the Berber. The dark superstition, the wild licentiousness, and despotic cruelty of the early monarchies. The timidity or ceremony under which the Hindoo or the Chinese hides his deceitful and selfish heart. The warlike tribes of the Thracians and Germans, so different from the just and high principled race which the imagination of Homer or the satire of Tacitus has described. A work, in fine, which would follow the various aspects of the moral world to the refinements or the corruptions of modern days, with all that society has gained,

and all that it has lost in its changes from poverty to prosperity, and from prosperity to decay.

XII. The corruption of human nature is virtually admitted by its opponents. These opponents may be divided into two classes, the ancient atheists and the modern Socinian school.

None of the ancients dreamed of representing man as naturally a virtuous creature; but some of them endeavored to escape from viewing him as naturally vicious and depraved, by laboring to prove virtue and vice as themselves unnatural and merely artificial distinctions; not grounded on the reality of things, but the inventions of men and the result of human laws; and recognised by mankind living in society on account of the advantages and disadvantages to be derived from either line of conduct, in the social state. If indeed virtue and moral excellence have no independent existence of their own, then truly man cannot be called a fallen creature, and so far they drew a consequent conclusion from their monstrous premises; but their own blindness to the reality of virtue, and their seeing nothing in it but that its practice was for the interest of society, affords a stronger proof of the degeneracy of mankind, and establishes the true side of the question with more complete conviction than they themselves could have done, had they perceived the degeneracy of human nature, and been endeavoring to show it to others.

Those among the moderns who have sought to evade the acknowledgement of the fall of man, are chiefly of the Socinian school, (for infidels, to do their discernment justice, have no high opinion of human nature.) Nor are these modern opposers in any degree more fortunate than the ancients in aiding the cause they have undertaken to support. The very principle by which they endeavor to escape from the doctrine of original sin, involves that doctrine in its highest extent. In order to avoid the

peculiarities of Christianity, they represent the mind without innate propensities, as it is without innate perceptions. This innocence is believed to continue through childhood and youth, and in solitude; but when a number of these innocent beings are brought together, they are found to have a strange aptitude to corrupt each other, and to follow the bad example of other innocent beings, who in their turn had been corrupted by other innocent beings, their remote ancestors. Both of these classes virtually admit the depravity of human nature; the first in admitting that virtue is artificial and consequently unnatural; and the second, while they assign imitation, or want of instruction, as the cause of the evil which exists in the world, in effect admit a propensity to vice, and the natural and easy growth of the seeds of evil.

Thus the belief of our fallen condition is one of those general truths which may be termed universal, since the dissentients are few and inconsiderable, and even their opposition illustrates and strengthens the tenet it opposes. The doctrine of human depravity, as we have shown, is implied in the very arguments which have been brought against it. But the difficulty is not to convince men that they are sinful creatures; they themselves plead guilty; but the difficulty consists in preventing mankind from extenuating their guilt, and while they confess it in the general, softening, and explaining it away in every particular instance; and above all, flattering themselves that God is such a one as themselves, that he will not judge them with rigor, far less punish them with rigor, if at all. And the sentiment most natural to man is, that of the latitudinarian divines, who, though forced to admit a bias to what is wrong in human nature, endeavor to soften their own admission as much as possible. They dispute about the degrees of this bias. They bestow every tender and endearing epithet upon the nature which they cannot

but condemn; they assert with emphasis the nobility of its origin, the readiness with which it rises to generous and lofty feelings, the ease with which it shakes off its bondage to sin and corruption; and if it has an inclination to evil, that inclination after all is but a small one, far less than some rigid divines are willing to suppose. Thus human nature is proceeding in a right line, like the atoms of Epicurus; but as this would not solve all the phenomena which humanity presents, it must, like these atoms, have a slight deviation almost inconceivably small "Clinamen principiorum," a little anomaly of which they can avail themselves when the first and straight movement is insufficient for the purposes of their theory.

XIII. Imitation is the first resource of all men, invention and originality the last. Hence by no other mark can any propensity be so well and so early evidenced as by imitation; but the imitation of evil prevails, not so the imitation of virtue. Now imitation not only proves a tendency to evil, but it connects, and that too upon the admitted principle of opponents, the evil nature and the sin of one man with the sin of another, ascending step by step till the whole human race are involved together, and connected with the sin of their original parent. And thus in attempting to avoid the doctrine of original sin, Socinians have taken hold of the very principle which proves that doctrine, by the light of nature, and by the results of experience.

The doctrine of original sin is inscribed in characters so legible, "that he who runs may read." "The wages of sin is death," and though infants have never committed actual sin, they are treated in the same manner as if they had actually eaten of the forbidden tree; and share alike in the curse with their remotest ancestry. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." As,

according to Mr. Knight's theory, (which, however, would require to be modified into a still more general law,) every cutting from a tree is but an extension, not a renewal of life, and as the offsets sympathize with the decay of the parent tree, and ultimately perish along with it, so the whole human race receive but the same curtailed existence, afflicted with sin and disease, and however far removed from the parent stock, circumscribed by the original curse to the same brief and languishing life, and equally involved in the general ruin. "Thus by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. And thus by one man's disobedience were the many made sinners."

XIV. The objections to such a constitution of nature are neither few nor unimportant. Nothing at first view can appear more contrary to all the prejudices of the human mind, more adverse to its natural notions of justice, than imputed sin. But our first views upon all subjects, which relate even to external nature, and much more upon those which concern God and things invisible, are utterly worthless. "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts." Of all the theories of the world, each in its day so highly esteemed by its followers, not one stood the test of facts and experience.

And indeed the very probability any theory may seem to possess at first view, is an argument against its truth; if it is agreeable to the narrowness of the human faculties at the first glance, it must be disproportioned to the immensity of nature, and thus proves itself to have drawn its origin from the mind, and not from the reality of things. All the truths which induction has slowly discovered, had they been proposed simply as theories, might have been controverted by many ingenious objections and difficulties; but fortunately the mind of man has no great con-

fidence in its own surmises, or at least in the surmises of others; and thus all opinions, however specious, bend at last to the authority of facts; and a belief in the world, such as it actually exists, gradually displaces all the chimeras of philosophy, falsely so called. But if this is the case with regard to objects placed immediately before our sight, and subject to the investigation of our senses, much more is it applicable to the infinity of God's proceedings in the moral government of the universe.

The mind of man, like the eye of man, naturally contemplates all things from itself as the only centre, and thus objects are not beheld in their proper magnitude, but enlarged according to their proximity to the observer; and that narrow field of vision does not correctly image the proportions of real existence, the just representation of which can only be communicated to the human mind by an intelligence unconfined to any limitation of view.

God alone can adequately reveal the rules of his own procedure. His justice, which embraces all beings and all ages, which itself is sovereign, and is at once the law and the lawgiver, is very different from the justice of man, circumscribed as he is within the sphere of his limited faculties, and subordinate to the all-ruling justice of God. Nor can any analogy hold between human legal proceedings and the course of Divine retribution, for there is no equality between an earthly legislator, who is himself subject to the law of the universe, and that supreme Judge, who has respect alone to his own eternal and infinite justice.

Part of the difficulty respecting God's moral government arises from the vastness of the scheme which it comprehends; the whole of existence being one entire plan, where every minute portion has a reference to the whole, and where each act of Divine sovereignty is harmonized with all the rest. Another and considerable part of the

difficulty lies in the invisible and spiritual order, according to which moral government is dispensed; while the vastness of God's operations cannot be embraced by the understanding of man, their spirituality escapes from his dim and feeble view; added to which the futurity of the ultimate decisions of God's justice places them beyond the reach of human cognisance, the present scene being but the opening of man's existence, and every thing here having reference to the world to come.

It is evident, however, that man's objections to the law of transference and hereditary imputation are chiefly directed against it when it is exercised upon mind rather than upon matter; and for this reason, because the facts which relate to natural phenomena, are obvious to their senses, but the principles which govern the world of mind are but slowly and partially discovered to us by thought and reflection. Hence those very persons who are shocked at the notion of hereditary depravity, admit without a comment or a reflection the facts respecting the hereditary transmission of bodily defects, such as the transmission of madness from one generation to another, and even of such bodily humors and distemperatures which predispose to vice, if they cannot be considered as vicious in themselves.

Thus, some of the Arminian divines, by considering the infection of sin to be physical and not moral, and by asserting that Adam bequeathed to his posterity a diseased and depraved body, and not a corrupted soul, seemed to themselves to have removed a great part of the difficulty attending our moral constitution, and are allowed at times, even by an opponent, to have proposed an ingenious theory. Thus the substitution of a sensible illustration for a dry argument or naked fact, often disarms men of their objections—and the moral principle is received for the sake of the material imagery under which it is conveyed.

XV. But the greater the objections raised at first sight against that system of federalism which involved the fate of his descendants in the conduct of Adam, the stronger are the arguments which it afterwards affords for the divine origin of Christianity, when we perceive the same system operating widely and universally amongst men, determining the existing condition of human nature, and ordering the form of the moral world. This is one of those remarkable coincidences, evidently undesigned by the writers of Scripture, which are strongly apparent between nature and revelation. It is a scheme which all men would exclaim against when first proposed to them, as unnatural and irrational, and yet it is the very scheme under which they are living, from which they derive the measure of light they possess, and the very circumstances which induce them to consider themselves qualified to pronounce in such matters—their advantages of fortune, of leisure, and of knowledge. Each individual of the human race, far from standing alone, and having his place in the scale of being ascertained by his own merits or demerits, is dependent in a degree on the vices and virtues of others, his progenitors, for his errors and for his knowledge, for his happiness and for his misery. The whole frame-work of society is founded upon this principle, so strongly (and we may add so naturally) argued against. It is the condition of man's existence, which he takes upon him at his birth, that his station, his character, and his prospects, should be partly determined, and in all respects greatly modified, by the station and character of his parents. This law of families is extended to nations, and subjects suffer for the vices of their kings, as well as of their ancestors, or they enjoy a degree of prosperity purchased by the virtue and the energy of a former generation. The same law extends to the whole community of nations; and the civilization and happiness of the

human race, depend upon the advances and the discoveries of the former inhabitants of the world; and each age of men takes its color and its destiny from the preceding, till we arrive at the very origin of the world, and trace the fortunes, as well as the existence of mankind, to the original parents of the race.

XVI. Thus what is supposed to be revolting to common sense, is yet found to be agreeable to the nature of things! We here perceive the beginning of a marked difference between the religion of nature (taking these words in the popular and erroneous sense, and meaning such a religion as men would naturally and readily conceive) and revealed religion. Popular religions and revealed religion doubtless agree in many things; such tenets as the being of a God, and the immortality of the soul, are everywhere urged upon our convictions; they are truths which are found of those that seek them not, and though clouded by much accompanying error, are in some shape or other the involuntary growth of the mind. Such truths, indistinctly sketched out by the unassisted faculties of man, receive their full light and development from revelation. But revealed religion adds many truths which popular religion opposes. They are truths which are confirmed by deep and large views of nature, but which are apparently opposed to the more narrow and obvious views which common observers naturally take. Natural religion is just and true in its outlines, but it omits facts, and the omission of these renders it inapplicable to the present condition of man.

That the soul lives forever, that God is the rewarder of virtue, and that his nature is infinite unbounded love, is all true, and is realized in the religion of unfallen beings, in the hosts of those who have kept their first estate, and their primal and undimmed affection to the author of their being.

That God is the Judge and punisher of evil, rewarding each of his creatures according to their works, is realized simply and without mitigation in the history of the fallen angels; who find no place for a change of mind, or a change of condition. But the religion of men is more complex; they arise not into being in the full strength of their faculties, free to choose good and evil, death and life; their condition was determined without their judgment, evil was already chosen before they themselves were capable of choosing, by their representative head, and by the evil bias of corrupted nature. A religion addressed to such beings, who are in some degree anomalous, must necessarily be an anomaly also. They have fallen, and not by themselves; salvation not their own is offered to them. Their first head was found unequal to have the destinies of a world dependent on him; a new chief of a higher nature, endowed with ampler powers, is proposed to the race, to retrieve them from ruin, and to place them in a higher state than that from which they fell. A revelation founded upon such a structure as this, carries the evidence of its Divine origin along with it. All other religions, of course, tread in the beaten path, the minds of their authors partake of the popular and current notions, and a scheme such as Christianity could never have been invented by man, or if proposed to him without miraculous and Divine testimony, would never have been believed.

XVII. Revelation is not, therefore, merely a republication of the religion of nature, but dicloses many truths which are not contained within the range of man's faculties. It goes deeper than the line of reason can fathom, and therefore cannot be said to be exactly fitted to the reason of man, but it is exactly fitted to his present condition. Wherever there is any apparent exception to the general course of nature, that exception, when fully understood and considered, leads the mind to expect a peculiar

provision on the part of the author of nature for the benefit of his creatures. Hence, even on the ground of natural religion, the hope of a Divine interposition in behalf of fallen man was considerable, and even in the darkness of Paganism a Deliverer was expected. This hope is strongly marked in the mythology of the Hindoos; it formed part of those prophetic rumors which, proceeding we know not from what source, circulate dimly through the world like faint fore-shadows of things to come, and had reached even to the Chinese, who expected a new religion from the west. It has found a place in the dual system of the ancient Persians, where Ahriman is at last to be overcome by the good principle. It is expressed in the doctrine of the Palingenesia, or "the restitution of all things," common to many nations, and which, in the form of the recommencing series of existence, modelled many of the institutions of Egypt, and may be said to have given rise to the Pyramids. A doctrine which spread to the far extremities of the west in the recollections of some happier and golden age, and in the dim or vivid expectations of its distant return. Those in all nations who thought most upon the subject of the moral world, felt how great was the darkness, and longed for and tremblingly expected light. But if such anticipations were cherished among Gentile nations unacquainted with Revelation, and were grounded on their dim perceptions of the degraded and helpless state of man, much more does the condition of the human race and the fall of man, as described in the Bible, inspire the certain hope of a Deliverer. The sin of Adam and the ruin which he entailed upon himself and his descendants, makes way for the appearance of a new moral head. "Adam, who was but the shadow of him who was to come," exemplified the weakness of the creature even in its best estate, and his fall teaches us to place our whole and undivided dependance upon God, who only is power-

ful and wise and holy. Every thing relating to the first Adam carries the mind onward to a second, the repairer of former ruins, and the more than restorer of what the first had lost, who shall not separate us from God, but who, by uniting us to himself, shall connect us more closely with the Head of the universe. Such a deliverer was Jesus Christ, such a king is the long promised Messiah, and the more deeply conscious man is of his own lost state, the more readily will he receive, and the more profoundly will he understand the Christian revelation.

The holiness of God, displayed throughout the whole Scriptures, and beaming from the character of the Saviour, shows man how far he has departed from the image of God; and this sense of his departure and of his guilt, empties his mind of all dependance upon self, and leads him to the Divine Redeemer, who alone is able to deliver from such a depth of depression. "The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven." "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam is a quickening spirit."

PART IV.

DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

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1. Anticipations of Revelation. 2. Jehovah our Shepherd. 3. Christ's Testimony to his Deity. 4. Unless Christ be God, Christianity untrue. 5. Variety of Proofs for Christ's Divinity. 6. Force of Conjunct Evidence. 7. Temporary and Permanent Argument. 8. Christ appearing in the old Dispensation. 9. Christ perfect God and perfect Man. 10. The Character of Christ the demonstration at once of his Deity and of the Inspiration of Scripture.

I. The Saviour came into the world heralded by a long succession of prophets, and not unexpected even by the Gentiles. It is difficult, when in the full possession of truth, to retrace the state of the minds of other men before a discovery was actually made. Very erroneous in general are the notions entertained respecting the state of the heathen, under what is called the natural light which they possessed—a light, such as it was, by no means struck out by the exercise of their natural faculties, but gathered from the collected rays of dispersed tradition, though much distorted and discolored by the variety of mediums through which it had to pass. But with respect to the Gentiles before the coming of Christ, we are not left solely to our own conjectures, we have in the writings of Plato a noble representative of the heathen world. A man of the highest powers, and of the widest acquirements, inferior only in

amplitude to the all-embracing mind of his pupil Aristotle, but far superior in a lofty imagination, and in devotion to what he believed to be the fountain of truth and beauty throughout the universe. Not trusting to his own wonderful powers, he sought out, and carefully preserved all the indications of what he believed to be the primeval communications of heaven, and thus he perpetuated not only his own opinions, but the sentiments of remoter ages. So great was the palpable darkness he everywhere found, that he introduces Socrates dissuading Alcibiades from offering the customary sacrifices till some teacher should come from on high; and the result of all his inquiries was this, that there could be no certain knowledge obtained of the Divine nature, unless by "some Divine revelation or logos," thus anticipating the same term, in the same sense, which was afterwards applied by St. John to him who alone reveals his heavenly Father to a lost and benighted race.

If these anticipations do not harmonise with the inner doctrine of Platonism, they are not the less valuable—if they do not belong to Plato as a metaphysician, they belong to him as a moralist, pensive about the actual condition of man, not wildly dogmatising about abstractions. It is to the praise of Plato, and to the misfortune of Christianity, that some of Plato's guesses have a near resemblance and surprising coincidence with some of the doctrines of the Bible; and the early Christians, forgetful of the warning of the Apostle to "beware lest any man spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit," sought a patron for Christianity among the philosophers, and found one in Plato. The common effect of all such forced unions took place here, each of the systems was forced to bend, in order that they might meet; Plato assumed a more Christian appearance than belonged to him, and Christianity in return was compelled to Platonise.

The supposed trinity of Plato was no doubt a great

source of attraction to the early Christians, though it is a doctrine, the merit of which he must share with the Egyptians, the Hindoos, and in a fainter degree with some other nations. At first view there is something very striking in finding three Divine powers so often re-appearing in various countries and nations. Those whose object of interest it was to find triads every where in mythology, were easily able to make their point good, owing to the plastic and mutable nature of ancient creeds. But upon examining more largely, it is observable, that as much might be said for the other numbers also, if any one were so minded.

For instance, whoever wishes to reduce all the ancient superstitions to the acknowledgment of one principle, need never be in want of arguments. Pantheism, or the supposing all Being to be indivisible, infinite, and absolute, was so prevalent through antiquity, that abundance of quotations might be brought to prove, not only that there is but one Divine principle, but (what Cudworth, and those who contend for the unity of the Deity among the ancients, have not been so anxious to bring forward) that there is but one existence.

Again, if the number two had its admirers, equally copious materials would remain for them to demonstrate, that all existence was by the ancients considered either active or passive, either as cause or effect, and that nature producing or produced, (natura naturans or natura naturata,) comprehended within itself the sum of things; and this view might be still farther enlarged by the doctrine of the two principles of good and of evil, of light and darkness, of malignant matter and beneficent mind.

The trinal system, or the doctrine of the three principles, is an easy addition to that of the dual system, it is only adding a medial power to the two former. Thus Plato, to matter and mind added the intermediate principle

of the Idea, Exemplar, or Logos, according to which, and by whose medium, mind operated upon matter, and brought it into form. Thus also the Hindoo system might consist of two principles, Bramah or the personification of the one Being flowing out into the visible creation, and Seevah the destroyer, representing all created forms re-absorbed into the Divine essence; but it was also at the option of the ancient Hindoo mythologists to introduce a middle principle of continuance and preservation under the deification of Vishnoo.

Should any, like Pythagoras, rather approve of the number four, it were easy to make an addition to the three principles above mentioned. Plato may be argued to have held either a trinity or a quarternity at the choice of the disputant. His three first principles are mind, the idea or logos, and matter; but the trinity which he is more generally supposed to hold, consists of mind, then the logos, and, lastly, the good spirit transfused into the world to guide and actuate it. Hence, combining the two enumerations together, we may fairly state Plato's principles as consisting of, first, original and infinite mind; second, of infinite thought or idea, the eternal produce and contemplation of that mind; thirdly, of matter; and, fourthly, of the infused spirit, the Agathodemon.

Considered in themselves, the opinions of Plato have no intimate connection with the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; but it is evident from a slight sketch of them, how readily each may be brought, by an easy process, to take the hue of the other. Whenever Christianity has been remodelled upon Platonism, the heresy generally termed Semi-Arian has prevailed, such as Dr. Clarke in later times supported, and in which the Messiah is considered not absolutely God, but "God of God;" and where the Holy Spirit is considered as a still more derivative emanation.

It was chiefly in defence, that the orthodox borrowed the same weapons from Plato, that they might encounter with equal arms the early philosophic heretics, and hence, even orthodox Christianity was formerly encumbered with Platonic doctrines, as afterwards it was perverted and harassed by the quarrelsome and vexatious logic of Aristotle. Christianity has always suffered in these foreign admixtures, and it is from the Bible alone, without any of the interpretations of philosophy, falsely so called, that we are to gather its genuine doctrines. All these dreams of old philosophy are fast fading away into oblivion, and it is only from the injuries they have occasioned by corrupting Christianity and obscuring the truths of the Bible, that they derive their importance. It is much to be regretted that some, from whom one might have expected better things, should, even to a late period, have blended the reveries of Plato in any degree with the truths of the gospel, and have used language not only unsanctioned by Scripture, but contrary to the absolute unity of the Godhead, so strongly established both by reason and revelation. We ought ever to remember with awful solemnity the declaration given to Israel, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," while with equal veneration we receive the testimony of Jesus, "I and my Father are one."

II. The Jews, notwithstanding the fall of Adam, and the corruption of human nature, had the privilege of having Jehovah for their immediate head, he was their guardian and their guide, and they could say with confidence, "the Lord is my shepherd." But had any created Redeemer been subsequently interposed between man and his Maker, the condition of those under the mature and perfect dispensation would be inferior to that which the transitory and typical constitution of the Jews afforded, and Christ, instead of removing the middle wall of partition, would have raised up a barrier, and an intervention

between the worshipper and the Deity. But far from this we are brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ, when we recognize Christ as "God, manifested in the flesh," that he might unite us still more nearly to the Divine nature, by his assumption of our lost nature.

Nor to those who are deeply impressed with the fallen state of their fellow-men, and all the evils which the frailty of the human head of the race has brought upon the world, is it natural to look for aid from any other quarter than that all-sufficient nature which is able to deliver from every extremity, and to extricate from the most irretrievable ruin. The moral of Adam's fall is the recalling the creature from dependance on its fellow-creatures, in order that it may rest alone on God for strength and happiness; and that moral would have been utterly lost had any other than God himself taken upon him to be the head of the race; to be their deliverer from the misery they had incurred, and their restorer to more than the happiness for which they were originally destined. Proneness to look to the creature has everywhere been the besetting sin of fallen man; it is this tendency which has spread idolatry over the world, and withdrawn man from worshipping God in spirit and in truth, to bow down to dumb idols, to adore the sun rising in strength, and to kiss his hand in adoration of the queen of heaven when he beheld "the moon walking in brightness." And this sin would have received an incalculable addition of strength, had a created arm wrought out deliverance, and a creature merited, (if so absurd a supposition might for a moment be permitted,) by devoting himself to Divine justice, that the transgression of man should be pardoned, and that he should be admitted again into the Divine favor. Only a Divine Redeemer could with effect interpose to restore man to communion with his Maker. "I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour." "Look unto

me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Answerable to these declarations is the testimony concerning Jesus in the New Testament, "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Jehovah alone, as the shepherd of his people, could gather again his flock that "were wandering through the mountains, and scattered upon all the face of the earth." "For thus saith the Lord God, behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out," and agreeably to this divine promise, Jesus came as "the good shepherd," "to seek and to save that which was lost," and even to "give his life for the sheep."

III. The proof that Christ is God is so abundant that it admits great latitude of arrangement, and may proceed upon very different grounds. The present age has been very rich in excellent publications upon the subject—we need only name the works of Archbishop Magee, Dr. Pye Smith, and Dr. Wardlaw, and the very able treatise of Mr. Fuller. Each of these may be considered as powerful and conclusive series of arguments in themselves; and also as works which, being original and independent of each other, have a cumulative as well as a separate value, so that if the conviction is great from weighing any one of them, it is still more augmented by a combined view of the whole. Not that the question has need of protracted discussion to place it in a strong light, (though the more it is examined, the greater does the strength of evidence for Christ's deity appear;) a few sentences are sufficient where brevity is required.

"The Jews came round about Christ and said unto him, how long dost thou make us to doubt, if thou be the

Christ, tell us plainly." To this request for plain information, Christ answered by affirming, "I and my Father are one;" then the Jews, well understanding what he affirmed of himself, and indeed nothing could be plainer, took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered, "many good works have I shown you from my Father, for which of these works do ye stone me?" The Jews answered him saying, "for a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." After this Jesus added, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not, but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know, and believe that the Father is in me and I in him." Similar to these declarations was his answer to Philip, who said unto him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us; Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, show us the Father?" Agreeable to this is the confession of Thomas when Christ said unto him, "reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing; and Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." Upon which confession Jesus pronounces a blessing upon those who have the same belief, without having the same sensible evidence afforded them; "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Now these declarations were plain affirmations on the part of the Lord Jesus, and were likewise so plainly understood by those to whom they were addressed, that the Jews immediately accused him of blasphemy, because, "being a man, he made himself God." This accusation of blasphemy pursued Christ throughout. It was upon the charge of the assumption of

Divine dignity that he was condemned to death. "The high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death." Therefore it was in reality upon the charge of blasphemy, (though under pretence of his making himself King of the Jews, in order to engage the Romans on their side,) that the chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be crucified; and having risen the third day from the dead, he proved by the greatest of miracles that he had a right to the Divine character which he assumed. As Paul observes, "he was determined to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Thus having power to take again his own life as he had power to lay it down, he showed by the energy of Omnipotence when he rose from the grave that he was indeed one with the Father, and that whoever had seen him had seen the Father also. So that men in all ages "should honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

IV. Thus we are brought to the alternative, either that Christ was "God manifest in the flesh," or that he was justly put to death. "We have a law," said the Jews, "and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Like the memorable sentence pronounced upon Cæsar, "Jure Cæsus existimetur." Jesus was accused of blasphemy, in that he, a man, made himself equal with God; he did not repel the accusation, and, on that accusation, he was crucified. In the face of that accusation and condemnation, God raised him again on the third day. Thus there is no alternative between receiving the Divinity of the Saviour, or rejecting the truth of Christianity—and if Christianity be rejected, all human testimony must be rejected also, since it is stronger in

proof of Christianity, and in regard to the resurrection of Christ, than upon any other subject. We have only the choice, if we reason consistently, of believing Christ to be God, or of believing nothing. If Christ were not God, of all religions Christianity were the most dangerous, and the most absurd. It has abolished ancient idolatries, to introduce in their room an idolatry a thousand times more difficult to be eradicated, and it has misled those most who are most desirous of honoring God, and who are willing to give up all things that they might please Him whose approbation alone is of value. And yet such is the strange condition of human nature, so darkened by the fall, and so averse from the truth, that there are men who reject the Divinity of Christ, and yet profess to believe the Scriptures.

V. The Deity of Christ, like the evidence for Christianity, and the proof for the being of a God, receives arguments from all sides, and from every part of Scripture. We have already mentioned the testimony of Christ to himself, that testimony which, as the king of martyrs, he sealed with his blood, and confirmed by his resurrection. There is, besides his own declarations, the additional testimony of his works. "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake." "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" and here Jesus declared, that as the Father through the rest of the Sabbath carried on the operations of nature, by those never ceasing laws which regulate its course, so the Son, with similar power in respect to the works, and with equal privilege in relation to the day, suspended those laws, and not only broke the rest of the Sabbath, "but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." But "he showed them still greater works than these," for, "as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." And he was not only to be the

resurrection of the dead, but also their judge; "for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son;" and farther, he solemnly declares to them that he has the power of eternal life, and that whosoever believeth in him has already "passed from death unto life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."

The Old Testament bears explicit testimony to the Deity of Christ,—"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre; thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And again, in another Psalm, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." Nor is Isaiah less plain, when he says, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;" and he describes the preparation for the entrance of the Messiah by "a voice crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."—Thus the prophetic writings speak, and we know their object is to bear testimony to the Saviour. "To him give all the prophets witness." And with such prophecies before them, it is not surprising that a declaration of being the Messiah should be considered as nearly equivalent, even by the Jews, (though not clear-sighted in understanding the sacred writers,) to an assumption of the Divine Majesty.

The evidence of the apostles joins in with that of the prophets. Christ is declared by them to be the Creator of all things. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." And as by him all things were created, so he is the object of universal worship in his character of mediator, as well as of creator. "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." When Paul sums up the privileges of the Jews, he mentions it as their crowning distinction, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." In the concluding revelations of St. John, and the visions of the heavenly state, all the hosts above are represented as worshipping God and the Lamb; who, as they are placed together on the throne of the universe, are joined together in the worship rendered by all holy intelligences. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing; and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

But it is not only from particular testimonies, however

numerous, and flowing in from all parts of the Bible, but also from the structure of Scripture itself, that the Divinity of Christ is abundantly demonstrated. The name by which our Saviour most frequently denotes himself, is that of the Son of Man ; this is a term which is evidently relative to his other designation, the Son of God, and in the estimation of the Jews, we have seen that the making himself the Son of God, was equivalent to making himself equal with God. Now St. Paul uses the phrase in the same sense, to denote his Divine, in opposition to his human nature ; " Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead ;" therefore in whichever way we reason, whether from the accusations of the Jews, or from the argument of Paul, we see that the Divinity of Christ is implied in his being the Son of God, and it follows that it is implied also in his being the Son of Man, for this being a term contrasted with the other, marks his descent according to the flesh, and by that contrast leads to his Divinity. Being about to assume by his incarnation and death the office of the head and redeemer of the human race, Jesus denotes himself the Son of Man, while on the other hand, his disciples, aware of the pre-eminence of his character, confessed him to be the Son of God. " Jesus asked his disciples saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am ?" When they had answered this question, he farther asks, " But whom say ye that I am ? and Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ; and Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." In the continual apostolic benediction, Christ is joined with the Father ;

"grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Deity of Christ is clearly apparent in the initiatory rite of Christianity. The form of baptism, as appointed by Christ himself, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, affords a universal and invincible proof of the Divinity of the Son and the Spirit, borne upon himself by every one who has pretension to the name of a Christian. Any supposition to the contrary ends in an immediate "*reductio ad absurdum*"—baptized into the name of the Father, a creature, and an attribute! So infinitely absurd a notion requires no confutation; but it is to be remarked that the apostles frequently use the phrases "baptized into Christ," "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," as equivalent to the full form, thus implying that "in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead." Again, the Deity of Christ is demonstrated by every exhortation to believe in him, to trust in him; for God alone is the object of religious belief, and unshaken trust, and trust in the creature is throughout the Bible denounced as sinful, and is placed under a curse; "thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." The sum of affections and duties due only to God, are enjoined towards Christ, supreme love, unreserved obedience, and unlimited devotedness; and reciprocal to these duties of the believer, the Scriptures display the corresponding exercise of Divine attributes in Christ—infinite power, the only proper object of unlimited confidence—infinite wisdom, without which infinite power would be ruinous; and infinite love which had no beginning and which will have no end.

VI. Besides the strength of evidence arising from the variety of testimonies to the Deity of the Messiah, we have also the force of conjunct evidence, where separate and independent proofs unite with the accumulating force of

union. It is thus in the proof for the existence of God; it is thus in the proof for the truth of Christianity; the light may be most evident on one or two sides, but it breaks in from all sides, and its full splendor is only discerned in its collected radiance. These various sources of evidence also frequently give additional value to each other beyond even their intrinsic worth. Thus we learn from the voice of Christian antiquity, and especially from the testimony of Irenæus, that St. John wrote his Gospel expressly to hold forth the Deity of Christ, in opposition to the early heretics. Had that gospel not come down to us, we should thus learn with great probability not only that the Divinity of Christ was maintained by John, but that it was the primitive doctrine of the Christian church. But how incalculably is the evidence strengthened when we possess the Gospel of St. John itself, and have before our eyes in that gospel so explicit a testimony to the Divinity of Christ, that it neither needs nor can receive any corroboration from without, but stands independent of foreign aid. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In St. John's own words, we are made acquainted with his scope and design in writing; "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." We have thus by a double chain of evidence the Divinity of Christ proved by St. John, and the belief of that doctrine attested amongst the primitive Christians. But when Julian the apostate writes that St. John invented the doctrine of the Deity of the Saviour, we have a fresh argument, out of the mouth of an accusing adversary, both for the primitive belief, and for the inspired apostle, and when Julian further denies that the Divinity of Christ was maintained by the three former Evangelists, he gives the greater strength to his affirmation, that it was peculiarly

taught by John. Possessed as we are of the Gospel of St. John, the testimony of Irenæus and of Julian are unnecessary to throw light on the scope of it; but full and satisfactory evidence is thus afforded, by the confession both of friends and foes, of what was the orthodox belief respecting the person of Christ during the earlier ages of the Church. Although it little concerns us what opinions men hold, after it is clearly shown what are the truths of Scripture, and though it may readily be believed that the primitive faith was correspondent to the apostolic writings, still it is not unpleasing to see the doctrines of antiquity illustrated by such brief and undesigned proof; and the testimony of Irenæus has the more weight, as he was only removed from St. John by the long life of Polycarp.

The divine writings, however, neither need nor receive corroboration from the opinions of men. Setting aside mere human testimony, it is from the conjunct evidence arising from the Old and the New Testament combined, that we behold the Deity of Christ established by a concurrence of proof, additional to the separate and independent arguments afforded by each. Thus when it is said in the Psalms, "O my God take me not away in the midst of my days, thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end;" no one can have any doubt that this is applicable to Jehovah, and addressed to him as the creator of the world. But in St. John we find that Christ was the creator of all things. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made;" hence we might safely infer that the passage in question was applicable to Christ; but we

have not that inference to make, it is already made for us in the epistle to the Hebrews, where many other Scriptures referring in the Old Testament to Jehovah are also applied to Jesus the Saviour. Again it is said in Isaiah, "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, and he shall be for a sanctuary, and for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel." Here it is affirmed that Jehovah is to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to his professing people; and this the apostle Paul asserts to have been fulfilled in the rejection of the Lord Jesus by the Jews; "Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." The essence of Christianity consists in Christ being our righteousness, and in the prophecy of Jeremiah, Jesus, our righteousness, is identified with Jehovah our righteousness, in the following verses; "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness." Christ and God are identified by the same attributes being ascribed to them, and the same powers exercised by them. None has power to forgive sins but God alone, yet Christ pronounced the forgiveness of sins. It is God alone who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, and Christ discerned and judged the thoughts and intents of the heart. As "no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father," so "none knoweth who the Father is but the Son." Here the knowledge on both sides is implied to be infinite. Each are represented as ordering and controlling nature. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Ubiquity is assumed in the promise of the

Saviour to his disciples, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Likewise immutability, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." The same honor is to be paid to both, the same glory is ascribed to both, the same duties are inculcated towards both. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." While we are to cease from glorying in any created excellence, it is in order that we, and all believers, may glory only in the Lord Jesus. And where duties towards God and our neighbor are in some measure the same, since we are commanded to love both, yet our duty to God is distinguished in this, that it is without limits, requiring the surrender of our entire being, heart, mind, soul and strength. Now, we are exhorted to trust, rejoice, and hope in the Lord Jesus, without any limitation whatsoever, nor is any, the least distinction, ever pointed out between our love to God, and our love to the Saviour. This of itself is a sufficient proof that God and the Saviour are one in themselves, as they are one in the worship of the redeemed on earth, and one in the praises of the spirits of just men made perfect, united with the angels in heaven.

VII. There are, as we have already remarked, abundance of excellent works proving the Divinity of the Saviour. As the acknowledgment of this doctrine is the rock on which Christ has built his church, so it is the main point from which most heresies begin to depart; and as it has been attacked with much perseverance, so it has necessarily attracted a great share of attention, and has been defended with every variety of talent and disposition of argument. But though many of these works contain very powerful reasoning, and abundance of information, there is yet no standard work, which, like Paley's Evidences for Christianity, has omitted whatever ought to be omitted in a work of permanence and universal refer-

ence, which has selected the arguments which possess most weight with general readers, and disposed of those arguments in the best form. All the works of celebrity yet published are controversial, they have arisen out of particular circumstances, and are occupied in the refutation of passing errors; nor has the fact been sufficiently attended to, that two sets of works are required, the one temporary, the other permanent; the first to expose the errors and fallacies of opponents, the second simply to establish truth. As errors and fallacies are perishable, so in some measure must be the works which are chiefly occupied in refuting them; their very success is against them; they are dragged down by the fallen opponent, and sink into a comparative obscurity. New forms of error rising from time to time require new works to point them out. But truth is one and the same, and it should ever be remembered that the best method of opposing error is to pre-occupy the mind with truth. A standard work should avoid entering into controversy, though the writer of it should be aware of those dark corners of the mind from which errors generally arise, and without specifically noticing them, should bring the full light of truth to bear steadily upon them.

VIII. It should constantly be borne in mind that there is but one religion, and that religion is Christianity; and that there is but one Mediator, and one medium of communication between God and man, Christ Jesus the Lord. This truth would have been more apparent had it been steadily kept in view, that when God appears in the Old Testament, it is Christ who is revealed, for "no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," and "no man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."

Considerable obscurity has arisen from the established

version of the Scriptures rendering "the angel of the Lord," what Horsley and others have observed, should have been translated, "the angel Jehovah." As far as language is concerned, the designation may be equally translated either way, and our translators have been led into their present rendering by the Greek and Latin languages not being able to follow the phraseology of the Hebrew as exactly as ours in this case can do. But what determines the true meaning here, is the divine declaration concerning the angel of the covenant, "my name is in him;" this declaration is not apparently realized in our translation, "the angel of the Lord" not being equivalent to the divine name; but "the angel Jehovah" at once marks the reason why the Israelites were to dread their conductor, possessed as he was of the divine name, and by consequence, of the divine nature, for it is written, "I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another;" and, again, "Thou whose name alone is Jehovah art the most high over the earth." This translation, "the angel Jehovah," would have removed all difficulties as to the patriarchs paying Divine honors to one who is mentioned as the angel of the Lord only, and whom we yet find the holy men of old worshipping with Divine honors (owing as an English reader might suppose, to some secret and unrecorded intimation from God) and exclaiming, that they had seen God, and were still alive. This translation, permissible by the letter, but adverse to the spirit of Scripture, breaks the unity of the Divine dispensation to the Jewish and Christian church, and leaves in the shade that Shepherd who attended the Jews through the wilderness, "who bare them and carried them all the days of old." With him the elders of Israel eat and drank upon the mountain, as his disciples in after times partook with him of his last supper; and from his presence Moses returned with his countenance shining as when

afterwards he discoursed with him "in the days of his flesh," on the Mount of Transfiguration.

IX. All the varied testimonies to the Deity of Christ are not only obvious in themselves, but established by that peculiar structure of the Scriptures, by which truths are fitted into their parallel truths, and by which the leading doctrines are interwoven and incorporated with the whole series of revelations. They are so plain in themselves as to defy all the tampering of verbal sophistry: they are not only evidenced by the language in which they are conveyed, but they are essential to the connection of the sense, and are implied in the very objections raised against them. The form of dialogue in which much of St. John's Gospel is written, has many of the same advantages as the form of parallelism. Destroy the meaning of one speaker, and the answer of the other no longer responds to it. The same may be observed of a series of reasoning; mistranslate, in defiance of Greek, one part of the chain of argument, and it is not only grammar but sense that suffers, the remaining propositions lose their link and their consecutiveness, and fall to the ground. It is, however, no wonder to behold the doctrine of the Deity of Christ a stumbling block to those that trust in their own reason. While he is ever the rock of the true Israel of God, he has in all ages been a stone of offence to those that were wise in their own conceit. Such has been, and such will be the case, for unless a man become as a little child he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. While those who reject Christ as the divine Saviour, behold none of the glory which is reflected from his countenance, they whose minds are opened to receive the testimony of God concerning his Son, behold him indeed as revealing the Father unto them, and find him in the midst of weakness, and surrounded with obloquy and scorn, Christ the power

of God and the wisdom of God, bringing eternal salvation to as many as trust in him.

In Christ the Divine glory, far from being lessened by being enshrined in flesh, shines out only more conspicuous. The Divine nature is manifested in the infinity of the Divine attributes. Holiness that will not bend itself to the passing by of any sin; infinite love that pays the penalty of all sins; Divine wisdom which has found out a ransom for the guilty beyond all expectation, and sovereign power which is carrying the whole plan of redemption to its full accomplishment.

The Divinity of Christ affords a new argument for the truth of Christianity, from the wonderful harmony in which it stands with all the other doctrines of revelation. It is so intimately connected with all other heavenly truths, that whosoever has begun to depart from the faith, has generally commenced by endeavoring to soften or to explain away the absolute Deity of the Saviour, and as the progress towards error is accelerated, Christ is degraded at every step of the descent, first to an emanation, then to a mere creature, then to a mere man. On the contrary, whoever holds the doctrine of Christ's Divinity, generally maintains the other peculiar doctrines of Christianity also, and if he reasons consistently he must do so, for they are all connected by a very intimate series of proof.

Light manifests itself. Christ, "the true light," at his coming into the world, carries in his own splendor the evidence of his Deity. The heathen were ignorant of the extent of their guilt; even supposing their guilt to be removed, they were ignorant of what their future character ought to be; and they were ignorant of the Divine Being, even had they wished to serve him. Their ignorance was thus deep and threefold, thick palpable darkness. Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, with the brightness of his rising,

dispels all these shades at once. From him we learn the lost condition of man in all the extent of his alienation from God, and all the liability to future misery under which he is doomed. Beholding Jesus, we behold what man ought to be, not merely taught by words, but having his perfect example a guide for us, as at all times a model for private and for public life, reconciling all the conditions of humanity in his own person, the pattern of a child and a subject, as well as of a teacher and a king. "A light that enlighteneth every man," in small circumstances as well as in great, and in all circumstances whatsoever. In his countenance and in his character the Deity and the Divine attributes are made intelligible to our feeble comprehension; it is no longer the privilege of the philosopher to inquire what God is, and, like Plato, to pronounce that a question difficult to find and impossible to utter; the ignorant and wayfaring man can now no longer err, except wilfully, for God has revealed himself in Christ Jesus to every understanding.

We have a new proof of the truth of Christianity in the adaptation of the character of Christ as a Saviour to the whole condition of man. Lost and wretched as we are; in the "unsearchable riches of Christ," we have all our wants supplied. Born the children of wrath; by him we have "power to become the sons of God." Wandering from the source of all good; in him we have a Shepherd who brings us back to the fountain of living waters. Guilty and polluted; we have in him the purification of all our stains. The objects of God's vengeance; we have in him the satisfaction and the atonement for our transgressions. Doomed to death, and drawing near to the grave; he is to us "the resurrection and the life." Incapable of discerning the purity of the Divine nature, and still more incapable of loving it; through faith in Christ, and the operation of the Divine Spirit, we receive

a new and spiritual nature, by which we are enabled not only to know but to love God, whereby we are conformed to the Divine character, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

X. Christ alone, of all teachers, has shown in what the perfection of a creature consists; in supreme love to God, and love to his fellow-creatures. This is so superior to all other systems of Ethics, that the mere giving such a rule might be considered as no mean probability of the teacher who gave it being sent from heaven; but when we behold this rule exemplified throughout the whole life of Christ, in every action and in every word, we have a proof of the Divine origin of Christianity which can never be repelled. The character of a perfect man has often been attempted, but has never been drawn. These imaginary models are a collection of virtues so ill combined together as not to act in harmony, and the figure to which they are attached has scarcely the resemblance of life. The Jews alone have described a perfect character, to whom no fault or defect attaches, and but one perfect character, amongst many who are justly esteemed worthies. This of itself would furnish an argument for their being guided and instructed by a higher power. But if the describing of a perfect man be above the powers of unassisted genius, how utterly hopeless would be the attempt to describe God, of whose being unenlightened nature has formed no just conception, and this infinite Being assuming human nature, and acting at once with the limitations of humanity, and with the infinitude of the Godhead! Man's notions of superior power are naturally either too abstract, or too gross and corporeal. They either imagine a Being above all Being, not conceivable from the immensity of his nature; or they shape out to themselves deities such as they themselves are, limited in their faculties, and vicious in their dispositions. But in

the face of Jesus we behold the glory of God shining without a cloud; infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite holiness, and yet intelligible in some measure to the understanding of a child. Though manifested in the flesh, there is nothing gross or corporeal which any one could conceive of the Divine character from its manifestation in him. The Divine attributes, though veiled in the flesh, are not limited, they exist in their fullness of perfection, and while perfect God, Christ is yet perfect man. At once the image of the invisible God, and the exemplar of men, he shows us what God is, and what man ought to be. The fishermen of Galilee could as soon have created a world as have invented a character like that of Jesus, considered merely as man; but when Christ is drawn both as perfect man and perfect God, at once holding forth a pattern and example to the worshipper, and reflecting the full glory of the absolutely perfect object of worship, we have in this miracle of portraiture a demonstration for Christianity the most complete that can be conceived; and the Scriptures must be acknowledged to contain within themselves a proof of their Divine origin, independent of all others, while they thus condense in the character of Christ the whole of religion—its invincible evidence, and its transforming power.

PART V.

THE ATONEMENT.

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1. Sacrifice, primeval and universal. 2. The Jewish sacrifices a transference of guilt and punishment. 3. One religion. Judaism prospective.—Christianity retrospective. 4. Christ a perfect Sacrifice and a perpetual Priest. 5. By Christ the law fulfilled, and its penalty paid. 6. Infinite value of Christ's death. 7. Objections to vicarious punishment. 8. The Finite not the measure of the Infinite. 9. Inadequate views of the Atonement. 10 Salvation already complete on the part of God.

I. The custom the most universally diffused through all nations is the rite of sacrifice. Altars have been everywhere raised; fires on these altars were kept continually burning, and smoke from unnumbered offerings was in every nation, and in every age ascending towards heaven, to avert its deserved wrath, and to propitiate its favor. Sacrifice and prayer, were the remedies proposed for all evils. When any misfortune befel the state, they immediately reflected whether any sacrifice had been omitted, any Deity left unappeased. The universality of the practice has everywhere left its traces, in the monuments, the language, and creeds of nations far dispersed, or ages ago extinct; and the notion of placating the wrath of Heaven; of an atonement for offences; of a sacrifice and of a victim, are too deeply and widely spread, ever to be eradicated by any sophistry, or to need explanation as new and unheard of terms.

Being the earliest institution of the human race, the offering of sacrifice has become one of the remnants of the primeval world—a token of the common origin and interests of mankind, and preserved nearly entire by continual observance, while the traditionary fragments, of the fall of man—the loss of Eden—and the ruin of the world by a deluge, have been altered and mutilated by passing from mouth to mouth, so as often to retain but faint traces of their original. Practices are less perishable than opinions, and accordingly the heathen sacrifices strongly resemble the Jewish. In both there is the same transference of guilt from the offerer to the victim, indicated too by the same emblematic action, the laying the hand of the offerer upon the victim's head. Even the minute and less important circumstances of burning salt and spices along with the offering, were observed alike by both. They had alike their national sacrifices, and atoning solemnities, and the fire was kept up perpetually as the safeguard of the national welfare.

Had the ancient nations however been asked whence they derived an institution so universal, they could only have referred to an antiquity too remote to be investigated, and must have traced it to those times when the immortals were the companions of men, and derived it as an institution from the immediate appointment of Heaven. The Jews alone among the nations possessed an account of its original establishment, and thus the rite of sacrifice becomes a proof of the authenticity of the intelligence which the Jewish Scriptures convey to us concerning the earliest history of man. In the Hebrew writings we have a key to the origin and meaning of the heathen sacrifices, and in Christianity we have a key to the Jewish sacrifices, and thus we may trace a connection between the rudest and most barbarous rites, and that promised Deliverer, "the

desire of all nations," who was to take upon him the sins of the world, and bear them in his own body on the tree.

We may also trace the provision which God made for rendering Christianity, at the first hearing, intelligible to the nations among whom it was to be preached. Had not the Gentiles, from perpetually practising the rites of sacrifice, been acquainted with such terms as atonement, placation, expiation, and had not similar phrases been current in their language, the difficulty of expressing Christian truth to them, and their inaptitude to comprehend it when proclaimed, would have been much increased. By sacrifices they not only confessed their guilt, and their need of an atonement, but expressed that the guilty were spared on account of the substitution of the guiltless.

II. It is clear then, that the full import of all the sacrificial rites is apparent in the Jewish institutions alone, and that while other nations had preserved the practice, they had in a great measure lost its signification, having no written comments to enforce and perpetuate the meaning of it. With the Jews the guilt which sacrifice was to expiate, was clearly defined by the laws, judgments, and statutes with which the promulgation of their expiatory ritual was accompanied. The Jewish nation were a nation of priests set apart from all physical as well as moral impurity, and the system of purifications which they continually needed, offered palpable and outward signs ever pressed upon their senses, of the guilt under which the whole human race lay, and of the atonement and moral purification which they required in all their approaches to the Holy God. Without shedding of blood the Jewish system could in no wise be carried on; the moral law, that transcript of the mind of God, as fallen creatures, the Jews could not fulfil; the ceremonial law prescribed a degree of physical purity which was equally unattainable. "A yoke," as St. Peter observes, "which

neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," and the whole Israelitish nation made a visible confession of their guilt, and of the impossibility of their pleasing God by their own efforts, in a continual course of sacrifices by which the guilt of the offender was transferred to the head of the innocent victim, and the wrath of heaven was appeased by the shedding of substituted blood. Without blood shed there was no way of access to the Deity. The present of a burnt offering, or the federal rite of a peace offering, equally with the more exclusive atoning sacrifice of the sin offering, marked the guilt of the worshipper, and showed that his life was only spared on account of the substitution of another.

The very Hebrew term by which the sin offering is designated in the Jewish law, "it is sin," instead of, 'it is a sin offering,' shows how deeply the transference of guilt was engraven in the language itself.

In the ritual observed by the priests when sending the scape-goat into the wilderness, the imputation of iniquity is very distinctly marked. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hands of a fit man into the wilderness, and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited, and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness."

Without shedding of innocent blood there was no remission to the guilty, and no approach to the Deity. "When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, this is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both

the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

III. Thus the whole human race, by the rite of sacrifice, have, from the earliest ages, had their eyes directed to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The heathen, by an observance, of which they knew not the importance and the significance, confessed their need of the only effectual atonement; and the Jews, through all their varied rites, were carried forward to the time when the moral and the ceremonial law should both be fulfilled in Him that was to come, and to that period when all the types and shadows should flee away and disappear with the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

All the Jewish offerings were evidently shadows whereby there was kept up a continued sense of guilt and unworthiness on the part of the worshipper, of the holiness of God, and of our liability to punishment. "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect, for then would they not have ceased to be offered," because that "the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins, but in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year; for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." None could suppose there was any inherent efficacy in the Jewish system of expiation and purification, to "make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience." Even much of the guilt that was contracted under that dispensation was figurative, and as the pollution was emblematical, the purification of it was of course shadowy also. And the apostle draws this inference from it, "if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the

unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?"

The Jewish priests, "standing daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins," formed a preparation as well as a prophecy of the Christian dispensation. These perpetual sacrifices are the connecting links between the advent of the Saviour and the fall of Adam, the continual memorial that the only mode of escape for sinners is that the guilt should be transferred from them to the innocent.

There is but one religion, the religion of Christianity, and one great atonement for sin, "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," and one mode of worship which began immediately after the fall. The Patriarchs looking forward by sacrificial types and prophetic intimations, and the Christians looking back by the commemorative rite of the Lord's supper, and by the declarations of the Gospel, to that one object Jesus, who "once in the end of the world hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," and thus is "become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

IV. In all the typical offerings it was necessary that the victim should be according to law, perfect and without blemish. That our Saviour was such an offering we have the voice of him who delivered him up to death, "I find no fault in him." His death was necessarily vicarious; death is the consequence of sin, but as Christ was without sin, his death was the consequence of the sins of others. In him met all the requisites of a perfect sacrifice, he was the Lamb of God, "without blemish and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the

world, but was made manifest in these last times." He was the last offering of the Jewish priesthood, the expiring act of the typical dispensation, offered indeed in ignorance and malice, but condemned to death with a view "that one should die for the people," while at the same time He himself, as the priest of a new and everlasting priesthood, offered himself willingly, and the shadowy and the real dispensations were at once fulfilled.

Thus did the Messiah, according to the prediction in Daniel, "finish the transgression, and make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness;" and having finished the work which he had to do upon earth, he removed the true temple from the earth to heaven, "for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," "a Lamb as it had been slain," he stands before the throne, and as a "high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens"—"he ever liveth to make intercession for us." "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool; for by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified." From henceforth them that serve him walk not by sense but by faith; there is no local spot upon earth, to which, as to the Kebla of the Mohammedans, they turn their eyes in prayer, but their thoughts are directed to the holiest of holies—to the inner temple of the universe, where God most manifests his presence to the most glorified intelligences, and where Christ has entered as our forerunner, having all power committed to him in heaven and in earth; and being exalted in the human nature, which he had assumed when it had fallen so low, "far above all principality, and

power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

V. Christ was a perfect satisfaction to Divine justice, in that he fulfilled the law of God, and at the same time endured the penalty of its not being fulfilled. This moral anomaly fitted him to be the head of those, who, on the contrary, had broken the law, and whom Divine mercy would exempt from the penalty of its transgressions. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "He hath done no violence, neither was deceit in his mouth, yet it hath pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief." "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." "It is finished," Christ exclaimed when he expired upon the cross, and as by his death the utmost penalty of the law was paid, so by his life the law was fulfilled in its utmost extent. Not one jot or tittle of it can be pointed out, which had not in him its full accomplishment. He came into the world, "to fulfil all righteousness," and thus is fulfilled the declaration of the prophet—"He shall be called Jehovah our righteousness." In Jesus we have in all respects such a Saviour as our necessities require; we have broken the law of God, we stand condemned at his bar, nothing remains to us but a fearful expectation of that wrath which abideth on every man that doeth evil; but, looking to the Lord Jesus, we behold him blotting out by his blood our transgressions, and nailing to the accursed tree that hand-writing of ordinances which was against us.

Believing on Him, the blessedness rests upon us, that was pronounced by the Psalmist; "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity."

But sinners as we are, it is not enough to restore us to felicity, that all our transgressions, though they be like the sand of the sea for multitude, should be cast into the depths of the sea, and buried forever in oblivion; this might entitle us to annihilation, but to nothing more; in Christ we have not only deliverance from wrath, but a divine righteousness wrought out for us. Having no good works of our own, by believing, we take to ourselves the work of God, his own fulfilment of his own law, a righteousness which shall last forever, when all the visible world shall be swept away amidst the ascending and brightening changes of creation. Well may we break out in thanksgiving, and join the chorus of universal nature at the glad tidings of salvation so far beyond the widest stretch of man's utmost hopes, "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."

VI. We must, however, be careful to take our notions of the Divine nature and infinite extent of the atonement of Christ from the oracles of God, not from the writings of men, who lower every subject, which they treat, to their own limited views. In the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, and in the transference of merits and demerits, the most obvious and frequent illustrations in Scripture are derived from the transference of debt, and the terms are borrowed from pecuniary transactions. But illustrations in Scripture, unfortunately, are frequently mistaken for facts, and divines, taking the metaphorical phrase literally, have reasoned as if sin and debt were in all respects convertible terms; and as money is divisible into pounds, shillings, and pence, so merit and demerit might, it is conceived, be divided into equivalent and corresponding parts; and one great division among Chris-

tians is in a considerable degree owing to the high question whether Christ paid the penalty for the sins only of those that are saved, or whether, in addition to this, he paid the penalty for the sins of those who are lost. But the difficulty and the view that led to it are alike imaginary, and have no foundation in Scripture or in reason. That guilt is not exhausted by application and imputation, we have too evident proofs among the numerous descendants of Adam; for should the world continue to an undefined number of ages, never would the descendants of the first man cease to be implicated in Adam's fall, on account of the numbers who had previously partaken of his guilt and of his nature. Adam broke God's law, all those who are connected with him as their federal head are accounted transgressors also; the question is here, not of numbers, but simply of connection. Christ fulfilled the law; those who are united to him by faith are accounted to have fulfilled the law also. Again, the question is not of numbers, but simply of connection.

Yet even were it otherwise, and if guilt or merit were exhaustible by imputation, the infinite merit and "riches of Christ," in every way "inexhaustible," might have precluded the rise of so foolish and unscriptural a dispute, as that which debates whether Christ died for all, or only for the elect.

Not however that there can be any reasonable doubt that Christ died for all, this is the plain and repeated declaration of Scripture; nor is any truth in the Bible more expressly and frequently affirmed, and, like the other truths in Scripture, it is not only plainly asserted in words, but is involved as a principle in inspired reasoning. "If Christ died for all," says the apostle, "then were all dead." Now it is evident that in Adam all die, therefore the death of Christ must be co-extensive with the "all" who die in Adam, otherwise the reasoning would be noth-

ing worth. And here we may observe the folly and the darkness of the human understanding, even in good men, who would too frequently sacrifice the plainest truths of God to uphold some narrow and pitiful system of man's device.

It is also to be observed, that the truth that Christ died for all, in no wise interferes with the doctrine of election, which is likewise a truth plainly and repeatedly set forth in Scripture, and shall be noticed in its proper place.

VII. It is certainly not surprising that vicarious sufferings and rewards should be strongly objected to. That the innocent should suffer, and that the guilty should escape, appears at first view to be the height of injustice; and as most men take but superficial views of religious truth, it will always form a strong ground of opposition for unbelievers, either open or disguised; yet, however ingeniously or powerfully the objections against this principle may be framed, they are all blunted by the fact, that not only in the scheme of Christianity but in the arrangement of the present world, the innocent do actually suffer for the guilty, and that the guilty on their side are benefited by the virtues of others.

The objection is, in this way, turned into a proof, with admirable effect, by Bishop Butler, and the stronger the objection, the stronger is the argument into which it is subsequently converted. A doctrine, which, at first sight, appears repugnant to all our moral feelings, is yet found established in nature as well as in revelation. It is thus that what is called natural religion is found to have no place in nature, at least in the nature of this world, and that Christianity, with all its apparent peculiarities, has yet those peculiarities realized in what is passing continually before our senses. Thus the principle of a federal head of the human race, whether it be Adam or the Saviour, and of the condition of mankind being regulated

according to the conduct of that head, and of men suffering from the faults of one, and being benefited by the merits of another, are principles which are operative in the every day affairs of life, and afford a key to many of the difficulties and anomalies which present themselves in the course of human history.

VIII. Divine justice is the ultimate and only justice. Whether men can reconcile the doctrine of the atonement to their preconceived notions of equity is a small matter; their notions and prejudices, like more splendid theories, must bow to facts, and to the nature of things.

The notions of human justice which determine the relations of man to man are not only limited by the narrow field of their object, but are circumscribed and over-ruled by that eternal and infinite justice which holds its righteous balances suspended over all worlds. God judges all, and is judged by none. He alone who formed the heart of man knows the extent of its aberrations, and the measure of its guilt. He alone knows the purity and extent of the Divine law, which is the voice of his own immutable will. Acting according to his own nature, he acts according to the nature of all created beings, which are but the imperfect shadows of his boundless being. His existence is the root and reason of all other existence. In his mind all things are weighed, and all interests considered; if he condemns, who can acquit; and if he acquits, who shall condemn?

IX. Of all the doctrines of the Bible the atonement is the most frequently presented to our view; it may indeed be considered as the subject of which the Bible principally treats. It is also one of those general truths, which are not confined to written revelation, but which, partly from tradition, and partly from their adaptation to the state of the human mind, have met with almost universal reception, and have circulated through the extremities of the

world. There is, therefore, no danger that the atonement should be rejected by any considerable numbers; the only fear is, that inadequate views of it should be entertained, and that, like the doctrine of the depravity of the human nature, it should be acknowledged in vague and general terms, while the extent and importance of the truth is endeavored to be limited and modified, and as nearly as may be, imperceptibly explained away. The indifference with which the gospel is listened to, and the misty and imperfect views of it which are taken, proceed from the superficial notions men entertain of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit to convince us of sin; without Divine illumination man is scarcely conscious of what sin is. Virtue and vice, which are in morals what holiness and sinfulness are in religion, are notions more easily acquired, and forced upon us, even without our seeking, by the light of conscience, however feeble it may be and dimmed; but the conviction of sin supposes some knowledge of the holiness of the Divine character; and the Divine purity is then chiefly manifested to us when the Spirit of God takes of the things of Christ and shows them with power to our souls. The holiness of God, and our own sinfulness, are made known to us at the same time and by the same celestial Instructor. Without this Teacher we may indeed talk and dispute concerning the atonement, but we shall never experimentally know it as it ought to be known.

Among Pantheistic writers, (and there is more second-hand Pantheism among many writers who wish to unite, what they call philosophy to religion, than they themselves are aware of,) the atonement, as a learned dreamer of the present day has proposed, is considered as an at-one-ment —a mere re-union of the human soul to the imaginary universal existence, to which they give the name of God! and by which profanation of that glorious name, they dis-

guise their departure from pure theism. Such is the at-one-ment which the mystics of the East uphold, when they contend that they alone maintain the Divine unity, since they believe that all things are one and the same with God. But this shall be more particularly noticed in the errors regarding religion.

There are other writers, who, without proceeding to these lengths of impiety, consider the atonement merely as an example and exhibition of Divine love towards mankind. That God in himself has no need of reconcilement to sinners, that he has no attribute of justice to appease, for that justice is not an original attribute, that it is merely a modification of his benevolence, seeking to produce the greatest results of happiness by maintaining the order which is most conducive to its attainment. That it is sin which makes the sinner groundlessly imagine that God is his enemy, while the truth is, (if he would but recognize it,) that God is always his friend, whether he sins or not, and that, therefore, God (the impiety of the supposition is theirs not mine) has conducted a sort of sacred drama in giving up his Son to death, that they may see by so high an example, in spite of all that conscience tells them to the contrary, how infinitely God still loves them, however sinful they may be, and without any reference to the imputation by faith of the righteousness of Christ. All such sickly and unscriptural fancies proceed from a want of that deep conviction of sin, that awful sense of the holiness and justice of God, which is so eminent in the sacred writers. Mere reasoning or disputing can have small effect in such cases, it is only when the Spirit is poured out abundantly from on high, when the sinner beholds the wrath of God revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and when he hears by faith the Saviour exclaiming, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me," that he will perceive that sin is a bar to recon-

ciliation on the part of God, far more than on the part of the sinner; and that Divine and eternal justice is an inseparable attribute of the all-perfect Being. The more we are taught by the Holy Spirit, the more we shall discern of the holiness of God, and of the hatefulness of sin in his sight, and of the absolute necessity of the atonement, in order that infinite love might redeem a lost race from eternal destruction. But now that the atonement is made, and that God has not withheld his only begotten Son, we may rejoice that all walls of separation are thrown down, that the veil is rent in twain, and that God, when we believe in the Lord Jesus, is our Father and our friend forever.

X. That the Divine justice is appeased, God gave a signal proof when he raised his Son from the dead. The penalty being fully paid, and the new head of the human race being raised to the right hand of God, the body is raised with the head, and all those who are connected by faith with the victorious chief, partake with him in his triumph over sin and death. All obstacles that formed a barrier between God and his rebellious creatures are overthrown, the congregated storms of Divine wrath are dispersed, and the favor of God in the face of Jesus Christ shines out upon the world without a cloud. There is no sensible communion as in Eden, for "we walk by faith not by sight," but there is the communion of the Holy Spirit, there is peace on earth, there is victory over sin, and the prospect of interminable glory.

"Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine cœlum."

PART VI.

JUSTIFICATION.

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1. God reconciled to Sinners, it remains that Sinners be reconciled to God. 2. Two Heads of the Human Race. Regeneration. 3. Advantage of Faith as the connecting link. 4. All men called upon to Believe, none naturally obey the call. 5. Election and Predestination. 6. Holy Spirit and Prayer. 7. Faith, Repentance, and Godly Sorrow. 8. Faith Indefinable from its Simplicity. 9. Faith, Assent, Trust, and Appropriation. 10. Faith remarkable for Simplicity of Means and Greatness of Results. 11. Faith in its operations at once Natural and Divine. 12. Freeness of the Gospel. 13. Fullness of the Gospel. 14. Certainty of the Gospel. 15. Tendency of the Gospel to Infinite Happiness.

I. RELIGION is either objective or subjective, it either regards the Divine character existing in its attributes, and manifested by its works, or it regards the effects which that character ought to produce on the mind which contemplates it. On the part of God salvation is complete. "It is finished" from the time that the Saviour expired upon the cross. To its infinite fullness nothing can be added. It is one and the same now and forever. The Divine justice is satisfied, and there remains no obstacle, not the slightest, to the reception of the chief of sinners into the Divine favor. The word of God has gone forth, the Holy Spirit is moving over the ruins of the moral world, as formerly over the darkness of the primeval waters. God is reconciled to sinners, nothing remains

but that sinners should be reconciled to God. Hence, religion consists of these two great divisions—what God works for us—and what God works in us. As the Divine Being lived in all the fullness of existence before he had breathed the breath of life into any living thing, so on the part of God salvation was complete before any were saved. All things are ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb before the guests are invited, and before one sinner is clothed with the wedding garment, and sits down to partake of the bread of life, and to drink of the water of life freely. It is necessary that this distinction be observed; for though salvation be a whole, and one flowing and continuous proceeding on the part of God, yet the feeble understanding of man must advance from part to part before it comprehend the whole. In the Divine mind the plan of redemption existed complete from all eternity. That plan was begun to be carried into effect from the fall of Adam, and had its full accomplishment on the part of God, when Christ, having fulfilled the law on our behalf, and wrought out for us a perfect righteousness, completed the salvation of all believers, by dying in their stead on the cross, and drinking for their sakes the cup of the wrath of God. But salvation on the part of believers is only begun when by faith they look to this great atonement. Whether they look through types to a Saviour yet to be revealed, as did the holy men of old, or whether they look backward, as does the Christian Church, to a salvation already perfected, "by faith they are saved," and "have set to their seal that God is true," by receiving the testimony of his messengers. Far from there being any hindrance or obstacle on the part of God, he himself has broken down the middle wall of partition, he has done all to manifest his love that infinity itself could do. God, though he be wonderful in counsel, almighty in resources, and inexhaustible in compassion, could do no more than

" give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." As a Father he is waiting to be gracious, he has come forth to meet the returning prodigal, or rather the first thoughts of returning are the work of His Spirit, recalling the lost to their only sure refuge. His word has gone forth, giving life to all who will receive it, bringing to every hearer and reader the sound of peace, conveying to every region of the earth the character and superscription of Jehovah, and sealing with blood to every believing sinner the sure mercies of David, the covenant of everlasting salvation.

His heralds and messengers are gone forth to proclaim the glad tidings of glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men. Wherever the stars in their courses had proclaimed his almighty power and Godhead, in language which not the confusion of Babel could obscure, the glad tidings of salvation have followed after, and his apostles and messengers, those better lights of the world, have pointed out a way of escape from darkness and death to regions of superior glory, and more unfading magnificence, than is opened out to us by the midnight heavens and their multitude of suns. What then remains for the sinner but to close with the Divine offer, taking up the exulting language of the prophet, "O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me thine anger is turned away and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation, therefore, with joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation."

II. As the two heads of the human race are dissimilarly constituted, so the links which connect the human race with these two heads have a corresponding dissimilitude.

It was fitting, that, as the generations of men derive their condition, so they should derive their existence,

from the first Adam, that their being, as well as their mode of being, might be embraced in the same system, and depend upon the same head. The gospel addresses man in a higher stage of his existence, as already brought into being, and arrived at the use of his faculties; and is adapted to him as a voluntary and intelligent agent, offering its truth as a fit object for his understanding, and the infinite good it reveals as a fit object for his choice. Therefore, as natural descent is the corporeal bond of union with the first Adam, faith, which, by believing, links the soul to the truth of the gospel, and which, by trusting on the Saviour, dissevers it from confidence in its natural powers and in its own works, in order that it may place all its confidence in the finished work of God; faith, we repeat, is the natural and befitting bond which unites the soul to its new federal head, Christ Jesus, and is the first act of its renovated nature.

Hence, from the two heads of the human race, the one earthy, the other heavenly, proceed the two opposite natures contending in the believer,—the flesh with its earthly affections and desires, and the spirit with its heavenward aspirations, each flowing from their peculiar sources, natural birth and regeneration. As water can rise no higher than its fountain, the nature we derive from Adam sinks to his fallen level; being of the earth, it minds earthly things. It has fallen into subjection to sin and corruption, and is incapable of discerning spiritual things, which are equally unsuited to its proud though darkened understanding, and unsavoury to its perverted and disordered affections. Corrupt at the very root, and alienated from the life of God, it has no relish for heavenly things. Whether it do evil according to its natural bent, or whether in its own strength it endeavor after some superficial amendment, it is alike an abomination to God, who is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, however plausibly disguised.

The reformations of the carnal man may, indeed, wear a fair show in the view of man, who sees but the outward actions, but cannot stand the scrutiny of Him who looks upon the heart. The wiser and the purer the natural man appears in his own eyes, the farther he is removed from the truth of God and from the Divine compassion; and, far from attempting to build a vain superstructure where there is no foundation, man's true wisdom consists in being sensible of his own vileness and folly, and in coming to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, that he may be purged from his iniquities, and cleansed from his pollutions. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

It were better for a man never to have been born, unless he be born again, born from above. Wo unto us if all our existence is derived from the first Adam, if we have no other inheritance than the curse he has bequeathed us, if we are only the heirs of wrath, sin, and death! But "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." By faith we become heirs of a "kingdom which cannot be moved," of a new and heavenly nature, and of a friendship with God which cannot be forfeited, because already purchased and secured to us by the blood of Christ, who has redeemed us from wretchedness and despair, and "delivered us from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

III. Many are the advantages of faith as the connecting link. It is by belief that our character is formed, as well

as our destiny determined. It is the believing evil to be good, that is the origin of all evil to creatures; while, on the contrary, belief that God is supremely good, and can will nothing but that which is good, alone can preserve the order and happiness of the whole intelligent universe. Whenever the finite understanding prefers its own partial view of things to the Divine will, evil must necessarily originate, and it is only by entering into the Divine plans, acting with the Divine Spirit, and being conformed to the Divine character, that a creature can either be useful to its fellow beings, or enjoy that fullness of happiness which infinite love proposes to all whom he calls into moral consciousness, and intelligent existence.

By trusting to its own doings, the creature naturally slides into the persuasion that it has a certain independence—that it can effect its own purposes, and can be invested with its own merits. But, on the other hand, by believing in a work already done, the creature ceases from itself, and from its own works, and is brought nigh to God; for trust is the very act which links the inferior to the superior, the creature to the Creator.

Nor is faith a principle peculiar to religion; belief and trust are the very elements of all our attainments. Belief in the phenomena we discover by induction, and trust in the veracity of the Author of nature, for the certainty of the ultimate principles of our knowledge, are the ground and superstructure of all science. Belief in testimony is as essential to the conduct of this world's affairs as to the reception of the evidences of Christianity; and our own belief in the truths which Christianity contains, is but the continuation of a principle, to which we owe our preservation in life, and our escape from the grossest ignorance and the greatest calamities.

IV. As Christ "gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time," so all men are called upon to be-

lieve in him. No exception is made, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," is the commission which is given to every one who is called to proclaim the tidings of salvation. Thus, as is usual in Scripture, one truth strengthens another; the universality of the gospel call marks out the infinite value of Christ's death, and both agree with the free invitation, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The gospel indeed addresses more particularly those who have a sense of their lost state, and especially is held forth as a rest to the weary and heavy laden, and as refreshment to the hungering and thirsting; because, without a sense of danger none will seek for safety, without weariness none will value rest, and without a consciousness of want none will seek relief. But the freeness of the gospel is not clogged with any conditions, all who attend to the truth shall behold its Divine evidence, all who seek shall find comfort and stability to their souls. Whatever be the motive that first led them to the Saviour, "him that cometh to me," saith Jesus, "I will in no wise cast out." But though he stretch out his hands all the day long, none of their own motion come unto him; though salvation is offered to all, all naturally agree to reject it; though invited to the marriage supper, "all with one consent begin to make excuse." "The true light coming into the world enlighteneth every man," but "men loved darkness rather than light." The light is painful to eyes accustomed to darkness, and men close their eyes, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Though "the Sun of righteousness has arisen upon the world with healing in his wings," men withdraw themselves from his influence; though the truths of the gospel are presented before them, "no man receiveth the Divine testimony." The command to all men everywhere is, repent and believe the

gospel, but none naturally attend to the gospel, or if they do attend, it is to its supposed difficulties, not to the arguments by which it is established, or to the saving truths which it contains. "God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," but "the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life;" but, saith the Saviour, "ye will not come to me that ye might have life."

V. Thus none come to Christ except the Father draw them; "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" before a man can even see the kingdom of God he must be born again, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And thus the whole work of salvation is of God, "that no flesh should glory in his presence," but, "according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." It was necessary that a Divine arm should work out our salvation for us; it is equally necessary that a Divine energy should work out our salvation in us. Thus boasting is altogether excluded, and we are severed from all confidence in ourselves, and from every dependance on the creature; that we may fix our unbounded trust from first to last on the Divine nature. We are no more able to renovate ourselves than to create ourselves, all our first springs of movement are from God. It is he that first draws us before we can draw near to him.

This is the simple and scriptural doctrine of election. Christ says to his disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." "Herein is love, not that we

loved God, but that he loved us." There is nothing mysterious in election, it is strictly identical with grace or favor. "By grace are ye saved." There was nothing amiable in fallen creatures to draw forth God's kindness, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." In man, God could see nothing but sin, the only reasons for his infinite loving-kindness and mercy are to be found in his eternal and all-perfect nature. "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ"—"that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."

Many of the terms of divinity still seem associated with the gloom of the dark ages, they are not yet taken generally, in their freshness and purity, from the Scriptures. What possible connection has election in the Bible, with preterition, rejection, or reprobation, and other uncouth and hideous fancies of the schoolmen? So far from the election of one having any connection with the unscriptural notion of the rejection of another, we are assured that in the times when election shall most prevail, in the glorious days of the millennium, God will no longer, as heretofore, "take one of a city and two of a family to bring them to Zion," but "all nations shall flow unto it," and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

It is true indeed that God does not draw all men to believe on the Saviour, and yet the Scriptures assure us "he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This is a great mystery, which we are never likely to understand till we come before the judgment seat of Christ. But what has this difficulty to do with election? It is not from election but

from non-election that the difficulty proceeds, nor does any modification of opinions at all explain away this mystery. The difficulty consists in a fact which it is impossible to soften or smooth down.

Our duty is not idly to brood upon that which we cannot speculatively solve, but to endeavor practically to solve it by our prayers; thus bringing down upon ourselves and others, by united supplication, so refreshing an influence from the Divine Spirit, as shall resemble life from the dead, and be the dawn of that happy period when "all shall know the Lord, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."

God, indeed, is said in Scripture to harden the heart; "he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth;" but this has no intimate connection with the doctrine of election, though it refers to a moral law which constitutes a part of God's government of the world, "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" God causes evil as the sun causes darkness, by withdrawing his light and his influence. The display of Divine truth, when it is not received into the heart, has doubly a hardening influence. The rejection or the neglecting of truth, while it is presented to the mind, causes that which should be a "savor of life unto life" to become "a savor of death unto death," for according to the constitution which God has given to it, the mind which rejects truth, is in a worse situation than the mind to which truth never was exhibited. And when God, as is his custom, withdraws, after much long suffering, his long-slighted and opposed word, the process of hardening is completed; all obstacles in the way of ruin are removed, and the impenitent sinner, stricken with judicial blindness, rushes headlong into destruction. But if even the sin and the doom of the finally impenitent, God will overrule to the furtherance of his own designs,

and the manifestation of his glory, "what shall we say? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." As "the Scripture saith to Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," does it at all impeach these truths, so often repeated, that God has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked," that "he is not willing that any should perish," that "he will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth?"

The predestination that is insisted upon in the Scriptures, is predestination unto life. Nor is there anything mysterious in predestination; it is spoken of as a simple consequence of election, and what necessarily follows from the eternity and unchangeableness of the Divine mind. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate." "Moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified."

Election and predestination are truths proposed in Scripture not to unbelievers but to believers. To all men the gospel is freely offered, but if any man accept the offer, let him know that he has not chosen Christ, but that Christ has chosen him. And if God has begun a good work in the heart of any one, he certainly "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." He is not a man that he should change his purpose, whom "he has loved, he loves unto the end." Hence the doctrine of scriptural perseverance, and the assured conviction that he who justifies will also sanctify, and that he who sanctifies will also glorify; for God, who appoints the end, appoints also the means of attaining it. But is the believer discouraged

by the difficulties that he meets with on his way? Here comes in the consoling doctrine of predestination. All things are parts of one eternal purpose, and the purpose of God is, that all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ "may have everlasting life." Therefore all the apparent hindrances in the way of the believer are in fact furtherances; they are, with all other circumstances and events, among the "all things that work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called, according to his purpose," "for neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

VI. As Christ has wrought out all our salvation for us, so the Holy Spirit works all our salvation in us, by enabling us both to will and to do of God's good pleasure. The influence of the Holy Spirit is more naturally considered, when the subject of sanctification is brought into view, but it is important always to remark, that the whole process of salvation is carried on by his means. He first effectually convinces the heart of sin, shows the purity and extent of the divine law, and our continual violations of it, and hence forces upon our conviction the necessity of a Divine Saviour. Then he testifies of the Saviour, shows the freeness and fullness of his salvation, opens the heart to believe the gospel, and fixes all our hopes and trust upon Christ. "He shall glorify me," saith the Saviour, "for he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." The truth of the Bible itself is admirably fitted to work upon our understanding and heart, but smitten as we are with a moral palsy, it has no effect upon us till the Holy Spirit restores the sensibility of the soul to Divine truth, and by his own energy communicates the saving power of the word to our perishing natures. The word is the

sword of the Spirit, in itself it is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," but to subdue the rebellious will of man, it must be wielded by an almighty arm. And though of ourselves we can do nothing as we ought, yet are we not left destitute; by prayer we may obtain continual and increasing supplies of aid from the Holy Spirit, for God has promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. He is not far from us, but remains an ever-present Comforter, ready to suggest all useful truth to our mind, to lead us to the Saviour, and unite us more closely to the fountain of spiritual good. It is his office to plead our cause with the Father "with groanings that cannot be uttered," "to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, to give us the earnest of our promised inheritance, a hope full of immortality," to fill us with all joy and peace in believing, and to give us rich foretastes of heavenly glory.

VII. The terms of the Bible, at least when translated, having been so much handled by the schoolmen and divines of the dark ages, are apt to retain somewhat of a scholastic sense, and the term repentance in many minds still bears traces of those times of ignorance. The range of meaning of the term in the original spreads from signifying the change of a single opinion to denote the change of all opinions, or a change of the whole mind; with some reference, occasionally, to the mortified feeling with which such a change is accompanied. But as the word repentance is now commonly used, sorrow seems chiefly to be marked by it, and thus it has come to be identified, or nearly confounded with that godly sorrow which proceeds from a change of mind, and a change of views, but which is but a portion of what is included in the larger sense of repentance.

Repentance, faith, and godly sorrow, though melting into each other, as states of mind all derived from a view

of the same truth, may be thus distinguished. Repentance is that change of mind which takes place in the sinner when he is arrested in his course, when he beholds God as infinitely holy, and the wrath of God denounced against all unrighteousness of men; above all, when he contemplates the holiness, justice, and mercy of God exhibited in the death of Christ. In this extended view repentance also includes faith, as when it is said, "then hath God also to the Gentiles, granted repentance unto life."

Faith is generally more restricted in its signification, regarding chiefly the testimony of God concerning Christ Jesus; "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Hence we see the significance of the terms so often repeated, "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," and why repentance is placed before faith; repentance expressing that scriptural view of the Divine character which leads us to trust in Christ alone for salvation; while godly sorrow results from repentance, and from faith, being that mourning for sin as the abominable thing which God hates, and that contrition of heart which views the Saviour as suffering for our sins upon the cross, according as it is written, "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." It is not that much stress is to be laid upon precision of terms in the Scriptures—and these are intimately connected, and often flow into each other in Bible phraseology, but many idle disputes and mistaken notions have been raised about them by the composers of artificial systems of theology, and it seemed right to point out their simple and scriptural signification, without reference to human authority.

VIII. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved," would seem to be the simplest of all directions. Many in the apostolic times hesitated to believe, but none

hesitated as to what belief was. The very simplicity of the act prevents its definition, and that very simplicity has occasioned all the difficulties that have occurred, when it was attempted to be defined. Like time and space, the more we think about faith, the less we understand it. It must be felt, not analyzed, and so ever present is it with our minds, that we must be conscious of it, whenever we are doubting about it; for in every affirmation, or negation, an act of faith or belief is implied. It is thus not only the simplest but the most frequent act of the mind. It is to the mind what the nerves are to the body, the very instrument of its movement and life. But as the acts of the mind were not intended to be reflected upon, but rather to lead us forward to the outward object, to which the mind's attention was to be called, faith or belief can only be reflected upon by a metaphysical effort. While in its natural state the mind overlooks the act of its own operation, for the object on which it is exerted, and neglects the act of belief, for the object of belief, which is truth.

The only real difficulty respecting faith is a moral difficulty. The mind of man is never truly of any opinion which contradicts the bias of his will, hence the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit to work in us "to will" as well as "to do." On subjects which are indifferent, belief necessarily flows from truth; but the mind easily withdraws its attention from the truths which are disagreeable to it, and we are not surprised at any one for entertaining an opinion contrary to the plainest and most forcible arguments, when we know that his inclination and his interest draw him in an opposite direction.

If it were not for this, it would be needless to insist upon faith at all, conviction would be inevitable as soon as "the truth as it is in Jesus" was placed before the mind; but when we believe in Christ, we believe against the stream and tendency of our fallen nature. This is the

reason why not only the truth is placed before us, but we are commanded and exhorted by the strongest motive to believe it, and why the penalty of unbelief is so distinctly presented before our view. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "He that believeth is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God; and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

IX. It is strange that there should be any dispute as to whether faith signifies belief or trust. Since from the nature of the truth believed, trust inevitably follows. If "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," then he who believes this, believes that God is both infinitely willing and infinitely able to save him; and his degree of trust in God as a Saviour will be exactly commensurate with the degree of his belief. Neither need there be any difference of opinion as to the nature of faith, whether it is assent—or appropriation or assurance—since belief includes assent, and since he who trusts, trusts for himself, and of course appropriates, and has assurance (as far as his trust goes) in his own mind or subjectively, while objectively he has assurance as far as the person trusted is trust-worthy. Thus, as he who breathes, lives and exerts the faculties of a living agent, he who believes, begins also to live a spiritual life, and exerts the acts proper to a spiritual nature; according to the words of the Apostle, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." "The truth as it is in Jesus" is the object upon which the spiritual faculties of the believing soul are exerted, and as is the

nature of the object such is the exercise of the faculties which regard it. Terms and phrases may be greatly varied, but the act of belief is simple, and is ever the same. He who assents to the truth, not with the lips, but with the heart, is saved; he who is persuaded by the truth; he who trusts, and he who receives the testimony of God, each and all "have passed from death unto life," have become partakers of a new nature, and are the expectant heirs of "a kingdom which cannot be moved."

X. The gospel scheme bears that eminently Divine stamp, of simplicity and apparent weakness in the means, and multiplicity and unmeasurable grandeur in the results. Belief, an act upon which, from its frequency, we scarcely reflect, so rapidly does it pass across our consciousness, but by successive repetitions of which we arrive at all truth—becomes the humble, and in itself the inadequate, but by the power of the Divine Spirit, the mighty instrument of a change, the magnitude of which eternity alone can discover. He who believes, believes to the end, and the acts of faith though minute are yet many. He who believes must be forever choosing between the visible and the invisible—preferring the future to the present, and postponing that world which is visibly spread around him to that larger sphere of existence which the Scriptures hold out to him, but which lies dim and shadowy—unpeopled by present interests, and unshaped by our earthly imaginations. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." By the faith of Jesus "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," and thus to us faith becomes the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

XI. The very simplicity of the gospel has been one great cause of its misconception. Men always suppose

that great instruments are needful to obtain great results; and this notion is very just as far as it regards a creature so feeble as man; but it is, as we have before remarked, one of the ways in which Divine power displays itself to our apprehension by the choice of apparently inadequate means to produce the widest and most momentous effects, in order that the most careless may see that the power which accomplishes all resides in God. Men think that a supernatural cause is required for a supernatural effect; many have some vague notion that faith is an additive power, and the technical term, however useful in some respects, may have contributed to the error. But it is not the creation of any new power, but the giving all the powers of the mind the right direction, in which consists the work of the Holy Spirit, and the birth of the soul into a happy and holy existence. The human faculties, when left to themselves, are strong, though it be but for evil, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and with the Divine will transferred into their wills, they display the wisdom and the power exercised in their first formation, when God approvingly beheld them, as well as his other works, and pronounced them to be good.

XII. The gospel, as it comes from the hand of its author, is perfect in all its parts, but men are apt to omit some parts of it, and to distort others, in order to fill up vacancies which they themselves have occasioned. Instead of enlarging their minds to receive the truth, they would narrow the truth to their own contracted and preconceived opinions. The perfection of the gospel consists in its infinite freeness, which removes every obstacle, and sets aside every excuse,—in its infinite fullness, which meets every case and supplies every want,—in its infinite certainty, which removes every scruple, and affords every security,—and in its infinite happiness, which occupies all the faculties of the soul, and satisfies every desire.

The gospel is free beyond any freeness ever conceived by the mind of man; it not only requires nothing as a term or condition on the part of him who receives it, but its very essence consists in abolishing all conditions. It offers wealth to irremediable poverty, health to desperate disease, safety in the midst of inextricable danger. He who receives it, receives it as the sovereign and divine gift of existence. The nature of free agents requires that they should choose, and of intelligent agents that they should understand what they choose, and should believe it to be true and good. Faith is not the condition of the gospel, it is the condition of our nature, and of all intelligent natures. Nothing can be more true than the scholastic axiom, "whatever is received is received according to the capacity of recipients." The gospel is infinitely free, but it is not absurdly free, according to some exaggerated notions; whosoever is willing, is called to take of the waters of life freely; its freedom does not proceed so far as to force those who are unwilling to take it, as liberty has sometimes been bestowed upon nations at the point of the bayonet.

XIII. The fullness of the gospel is founded on the gift of Christ, and in the axiom of the apostle, that with Christ, God will freely give us all things. In the multitude of varying circumstances in which the believers of the gospel have been placed from its first reception even until now, the gospel has provided for them all, at all times, and in every situation; each was placed in the midst of an inexhaustible supply, though, from their own ignorance and unbelief, they may appear to have lived in want while in the midst of plenty. For the natural darkness of the mind the gospel provides abundant light; for the guilt of sin it provides more than the innocence of our first parents, a perfect fulfilment of the will of God; for the power and tyranny of sin, the transforming influence

of the Spirit; for our fallen nature, the Divine impress of the will and of the word of God; for our proneness to yield to temptation, the victorious principle of faith; in the midst of human weakness, divine strength; and in the midst of the sufferings of time, the abundant consolations of eternity, and the additional encouragement that temporal evils are themselves eternal blessings. Thus the gospel is a fountain filled with all the fullness of God, and sends out its overflowing streams to fill all believers.

XIV. The gospel is infinitely certain. All the Divine attributes are pledged for its complete fulfilment. The Divine justice is no longer just to punish, but to save. Divine love, in the gift of the Saviour, has conveyed with it all other blessings. God has bound himself not only by an oath, but by raising his only Son from the dead, that whosoever believeth in him should never in any wise perish; whosoever believes is safe, whosoever wills takes of the water of life, and he lives forever. The means of salvation are infinitely simple and infinitely sure. Salvation is as certain as belief. He who doubts of his salvation must doubt whether he has believed that Christ died for sinners, whether he has trusted in that God who is able and willing, to a degree beyond all human comprehension, to save to the uttermost whosoever trusts in him. Yet, as the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, many mistakes are made upon a subject which would be plain beyond most others, were it not for the exceeding deceitfulness of sin. But, as certainty of salvation is of the utmost consequence, and implied in the exercise of holy affections, in the gladness of the gospel tidings, and in a holy rejoicing before God, as our King, and Father, and Saviour, we have three distinct sources of evidence, so that any mistake respecting each may be corrected by the check of the other two.

We have the evidence of consciousness; we have the

evidence of the truth; and we have the evidence of actions, which, being placed without, and inalterable by the deceptions of our own minds, and being open to the judgments of others, God has appointed to be the test of last appeal, as outstanding and permanent indexes of the motives and of the dispositions from which they proceed. He who trusts in God, is not only conscious that he is trusting, but the act of trusting is in itself assurance, when exerted towards a being infinitely willing and able to save.

He who believes and trusts, would thus naturally never doubt of his state; but the false confidence of others, and the deceitfulness of each one's own heart, lead every wise and humble Christian very properly to examine himself. Am I not deceiving myself, as it is but too obvious that others have done, who once promised fair for eternal life? Now, when an individual questions whether his belief were the true belief, he has only to inquire whether he believes the truth; for it is an axiom, however much it may be overlooked, that he who believes the truth has necessarily the true belief.

Here, again, the deceitfulness of the human heart may give rise to some perplexity in an inquiry otherwise of obvious solution; for it is evident that men mistake not only unscriptural confidence for scriptural trust, but also their own unscriptural fancies for scriptural truth, and that, too, in the grossest manner. Here, then, we come to the last and final test, from which there is no appeal but to the judgment seat of Christ, and to the revelations of the last day,—a test which is given us to judge of the state of others,—"by their fruits ye shall know them,"—and which, as we have still better opportunities, we are directed to apply to ourselves. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

It is true that many persons object to this test; sometimes, on the ground that it is leading us back to dead works; at other times, on account of the too great self-satisfaction they are likely to receive from a contemplation of their past life; and, lastly, and this appears the most genuine reason, on the ground that such an examination, instead of tending to certainty and assurance, would destroy the assurance they possess altogether. All these objections proceed from the same source, an inadequate view of the total corruption of human nature; all the actions of man, whether converted or unconverted, partake of the nature of sin, and come short of the extent of the Divine law. He who knows and feels this is in no danger of becoming legal; he is in no danger, in the second place, of being elevated in his own eyes by a review of his past life; or, in the third place, of desponding, since he must know that, while he remains in the flesh, great deficiencies will ever be found, even in his best actions.

Thus, since certainty is of the greatest consequence, the evidence on which it rests is tripled, and a threefold cord is not easily broken,—an evidence which meets us at every point, and bears with three distinct forces upon the heart, the understanding, and the life. It is a certainty so grounded, as to strengthen rather than relax exertion, since it is made evident solely by the exercise of the principles upon which it rests for its establishment; and it is a certainty which interferes with the exercise of no Christian duty, since it is alone from the performance of these duties that we rest in safety and in confidence.

Doubts have arisen in some minds whether it would not be a mockery to pray for justification, since they are certain justification has by them been already obtained; but justification, and the sense of justification, which two things are often confused, are neither of them an act terminated in a moment, (though whoever believes is from

that moment justified,) but indicate a continued state reaching in the Divine mind towards us from eternity to eternity, and kept up perpetually in our minds by contemplating the great sacrifice by which we are justified. At every moment we come short of the Divine law, and at every moment we need the atonement. Besides, it is not uncertainty which gives birth to prayer, but certainty: we pray upon the Divine promise, knowing we shall certainly obtain those things we ask for; and we pray for those things we have already obtained, that they may be perpetuated to us, and that we may be kept under a perpetual sense of our obligation for them. It is indeed rational and scriptural to return thanks to God for the unspeakable gift of his Son, to exult in a salvation already complete in all its parts; but this is quite consistent with prayer to have our sins blotted out like a thick cloud, and that we may perpetually enjoy the benefit of the one atonement for sin. In the Divine mind there are no changes and no additions, but the manifestation of the purposes of the Divine mind proceed step by step and receive continual additions. Those who receive justification are justified in the Divine mind from eternity. When Christ poured out his soul an offering for sin, and when the work on his part was finished, the work of justification was in itself complete; but it is not till each individual believes, that he has the sense of being justified. This justification is gradually evidenced to others by his works in this life, and will be completely evidenced to all the world by his acquittal at the last day. But he will remain justified in his own eyes through eternity, only by remembering that he owes his justification solely to the Lamb of God, who was slain in the Divine purposes from the foundation of the world, and God will regard him as justified forever in connection with that everlasting sacrifice.

XV. The consummating excellence of the gospel is its tendency to infinite happiness from its securing to us the friendship of that Being before whose frown or smile all created existence sinks into nothing. Cicero said well if he had made good his point. "I shall be vexed at nothing since I am free from every fault. Nec enim, dum ero, angar ulla re, cum omni vacem culpa." This the Christian might with truth say, had he his spirit only in subjection to the truth; and he has not merely freedom from the load of guilt, but from anxiety on account of the consequences of his actions, for he has the delightful promise that all things are working together for good, and are so interwoven and overruled in their issues as to produce for him the greatest amount of happiness without end. All the acts and duties of Christianity are of a soothing and delightful nature. Trusting in all powerful protection, hoping for inconceivable good, and loving boundless perfection, constitute the perfection of happiness, as well as the sum of duty. No doubt the darkness and the opposition which proceed from the remains of his corrupted nature darken and perplex him, but he carries on the contest not in his own strength, and he fights under the assurance of final and total victory.

PART VII.

SANCTIFICATION.

1. Salvation by Faith, a whole. 2. Union with Christ. 3. The character formed by Belief. 4. Transforming nature of Divine Truth. 5. The Word the instrument of the Spirit. 6. Divinity of the Spirit. 7. All things ready for Sanctification. 8. Mistakes respecting Sanctification. 9. Law of passive impressions and active habits. 10. Acting on principles the true way to strengthen them. 11. The practical view of Christianity the true point of view. 12. A Life conformable to Christianity the best commentary on it. 13. Conformity to the Divine Will the only true Wisdom and Happiness. 14. Practical conclusion.

I. Salvation, in the strictest sense, is a whole. All the parts are mutually connected, so that it is impossible to separate them in reality; but, owing to the narrowness of the human mind, it is needful to separate in thought what cannot be separated in fact, and to consider justification apart from sanctification, and the growth of the heavenly character upon earth apart from its perfect completion and full enjoyment in heaven. The process of salvation is altogether carried on by faith, and faith derives its efficacy from uniting the soul of the believer to the Saviour. Hence union with the Saviour is the ultimate principle of Christian doctrine and of Christian experience. This is the principle which runs through all the writings of St. Paul—take this away and they are dark, confused and

illogical; grant this principle and they stand out to the mind with the full conviction of an unbroken chain of reasoning. It is from this union with the Saviour that the perfect confidence of the believer proceeds. As Christ has paid the penalty of sin, so has he who is united to him. As Christ is holy, so shall he be also who is united as a branch in the true vine. As Christ is raised to the right hand of God, so shall the believer, from his indissoluble union, be raised to partake of the same glory.

II. The faith which justifies, being that which also unites to Christ; the faith which unites is the same faith which sanctifies. It is from our union with the Saviour that our new and better nature must proceed, as it is from our union with Adam that our fallen and corrupted nature has been derived. We have in the daily experience of ourselves and others a proof of the extent to which we are affected by the moral state of our federal head. No remoteness of descent or dissimilarity of situation has softened the virulence of that poison which was infused into our nature by Adam's fall. Everywhere sin prevails, and death, the consequence of sin, reigns. The effects of Adam's transgression are inexhaustible, certain, and universal. They who, by a living faith, are partakers of the Divine nature, will experience the effects of that union as certainly and as universally. Righteousness will in them have the complete and final victory; and immortality, the fruit of righteousness, will have its full and ultimate triumph.

In natural religion each intelligent creature stands independent, and in direct relation with the Deity. His condition depends solely on himself, and having once lost the Divine favor, and being in a state of condemnation and enmity to God, he must remain so forever. Such is the condition of the angels "who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, whom God hath reserved in

everlasting chains, under darkness, until the judgment of the great day."

But the appointment of a representative head of the human race in the person of Adam, being an act of Divine sovereignty, does not preclude another representative being chosen, by subsequent union with whom, all that believe may again recover the holiness and the happiness which had been lost, and may hope for that unlimited blessing which is implied in the grace of God, that is, in having an almighty friend.

Thus, in the Divine purpose, Christ was slain before the foundation of the world; on his account the fortunes of mankind were suspended for a time upon Adam, that those who had lost all by an involuntary dependance on the created head of the race, might regain all, and more abundantly, by a voluntary dependance on that head which is uncreated, and who, in himself, unites that which is human and that which is Divine; so that believers might be one with him, as he is one with God. "For their sakes," says the Saviour, "I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

The certainty and experience of our connection with the fate of Adam affords a continual proof that the union with Christ will be equally effectual; and as, by natural descent, we have inherited the beginning of the anger of God, and have had outpoured upon us the first drops of his vials of wrath in the sorrows and sufferings of mortality,

so by faith we do enter into the foretastes and anticipations of a blessedness of which the human heart, when its hopes are highest, can form no conception, which has no limits, as eternity has none, nor infinite love, nor infinite power.

When the Apostle Paul proclaimed that the righteousness which could not be obtained by the works of the law, was attainable by believing in the fulfilment of the law by Christ, safety, upon terms apparently so easy, gave rise to objections the same then as ever afterwards, that the freedom of the pardon would give freedom to sin. This objection might have been justly answered then, as it now frequently is, by showing the moral effects and results of unfeigned faith. Pardon will produce gratitude, gratitude love, and love is the fulfilling of the law. It might have been answered also on yet higher grounds, that faith is a Divine operation, that the same Holy Spirit which produces true faith will produce by its regenerating influence all the other Christian virtues, "for we are his workmanship, created by Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." But the Apostle takes higher ground still, and shows that faith justifies because it unites to the fountain of righteousness and holiness, to him who is the source of the law, and who has fulfilled the law, to Christ, "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

From this union with the Saviour, the security of the believer rests immovably upon the Rock of Ages; "If God be for us, who can be against us? who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Even the angels God chargeth with folly, and the heavens are not clean in his sight, but believers, participating in the perfect obedience and essential holiness of the Saviour, may approach with all boldness the judgment-seat of infinite purity.

Every step of the road to glory is already marked with the defeat of their enemies. He who is their representative is crowned with victory. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are under his feet. Had he not risen triumphant from the dead, the fate of all who trusted in him was marked by that of their leader, they must have mouldered in the grave, awaiting their final doom of wrath. But as their leader was victorious, they also enjoy the fruits of victory. Heaven is open to them, a place is prepared for them; they are stamped with the impress of the Divine holiness; they are set apart as priests, they are crowned as kings. Whatsoever they will is done, for their will is co-incident with the Divine will.

III. Without ascending so high as the principle of union with the Saviour, there is much in the nature of faith and the word of God, which tend to produce a conformity in the believer to the Divine character. Union with the Saviour is maintained by his word abiding in us, and his word abides in us as long as we believe. Thus faith is the medium of sanctification; the channel through which the graces flow down upon the believer. As long as faith is active, the work of sanctification is proceeding; when faith fails, sanctification ceases also. Thus "by grace we are saved, through faith;" we are sanctified as well as justified by faith; and faith, the first act of the renewed nature, is the principle by which that nature is maintained throughout, till faith be swallowed up in sight, and sanctification be terminated in glory.

Many are the objections that are made to resting holiness upon so frail a foundation as faith is conceived to be; but it is from ignorance of the nature of Christian faith, and from confounding it with other vague opinions which float through the mind, without producing any change of character or having any influence on the course of life. There are numberless human systems which have been

exalted, like the deities of Epicurus, to reign in some vacant space, but with the implied condition that they are to interfere in no earthly business. Such systems as these may be cherished or dismissed without profit and without loss; but the faith of Christianity is altogether practical. From its very commencement it consists in a change of character, and in substituting a chief good, which brings under its influence and domination the pursuits which are the chief objects of other men. It gives a new bent to the mind, by disclosing the true character of God, by exhibiting his power as immediately exerted upon us, and by giving to the hopes, and fears, and affections, new objects of infinite value, and of infinite duration. For as the object of worship, such are the worshippers; and men are determined in their moral character by the way in which they solve these two questions—what is good? and what is God?

IV. Sanctification is carried on by faith, and faith consists in believing the word of God; that word is eminently adapted to produce holiness—written at the immediate dictation of God, it brings the reader or hearer of it immediately into the Divine presence, and the sinner feels himself under the scrutiny of that Being who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. But above all, in that great and central truth with which faith is chiefly occupied, the death and resurrection of the Saviour, are the attributes of God most vividly manifested, and most transformingly felt—here it is that the words of the Saviour are verified, "and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." This at once gives the greatest encouragement to sinners, and the greatest terror. If God spared not his own Son, who shall doubt of his infinite love? If God spared not his own Son, who can doubt of his infinite justice?

But even the Bible, when not employed upon subjects so decidedly spiritual and heavenly, has yet a transforming

efficacy upon the character There is a reality about all its descriptions which puts to flight that vain, and deceitful, and imaginary show, which exists only in the deluded imagination, yet from which sin draws its chief enticements, and the earth, instead of spreading out as it does to the eye of sense into boundless magnitude, becomes, as in truth it is, but a small speck in the immensity of the heavens.

V. But the word, admirably adapted as it is to holiness of character, is but the instrument of the Divine Spirit, who gives life to the letter of Scripture, and who writes upon the tablets of the heart, that which is ineffective, while it only meets the eye of corrupted man. Even our natural life is the continuation of the exercise of that Divine power which first called us into being. In him we move and breathe. If our bodies subsist through his life-giving energy, much more our souls, and much more the soul who is redeemed by the Saviour's blood, and for whom the aid of the Spirit is purchased, in order that in the absence of the Saviour's bodily presence, who is at the right hand of God making intercession for them day and night in the heavenly temple, the Spirit may abide in their hearts by faith, and be their ever present Comforter. Nor is there any room for enthusiasm in this unseen and spiritual aid. We have the great and present emblem of the Spirit in the wind which is visible only in its effects. It is by the fruits of the Spirit that we are conscious of his presence, and it is not by new truths that he acts upon the mind, but by giving to old truths a new and victorious efficacy. And though the Spirit breathes upon the soul with a sovereign and Divine freedom, yet his aid, and the manner of attaining an increased measure of it, is pointed out and ascertained to every believer—the promise is, "ask and receive," and the help of the Spirit is given to faith in prayer, and the abiding influence of the Spirit re-

mains where sin is avoided, and a heavenly frame of mind kept up.

VI. The Holy Spirit is revealed in Scripture, as carrying on not only the whole scheme of redemption, but, in the infinitude of his operation, as brooding upon the deep, as recalling into order the earth, which was without form and void, and as garnishing the heavens with their multitude of worlds. Yet still sanctification is so peculiarly the work of the Holy Spirit, that his Divinity and his influence require to be especially considered in connection with the advancement of the soul in holiness. When the absolute Divinity of Christ is proved, it may be considered to draw along with it as a necessary consequence, the Divinity of the Spirit; the same difficulties naturally occur against both, and those that heartily receive the one, will scarcely be supposed to offer any opposition to the reception of the other. The Deity of the Holy Spirit, as well as that of the Saviour, is ascertained by the form of Baptism, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and if, as we have before remarked, the absurdity is self evident of baptizing in the name of God—a creature—and an attribute, that absurdity, if it were possible, would be increased by the supposition that the rite was administered in the name of the Father, who is God, of the Son, who is God manifest in the flesh, and of the Holy Ghost, an attribute, or a creature!

As the arguments for the Divinity of the Holy Spirit are forcibly and concisely stated by Barrow, in his sermon upon that subject, it will be sufficient to transcribe two portions of it here. "The most proper names of God, and the most Divine titles are everywhere (according to just interpretation, and by perspicuous consequence) attributed unto the Holy Spirit: inasmuch as often (almost ever) upon various occasions the same words, works, and acts are referred to God and the Holy Spirit; so that

whatever God is said to have spoken, to have performed, to have made, that also is reported, said, transacted, produced by the Holy Ghost; and, reciprocally, whatever doth any way regard the Holy Spirit, that is referred to God; the which doth argue that between the beings denoted by the names God and Holy Spirit, an essential identity or unity doth intercede. Of the Israelites, being wickedly incredulous and refractory, it is said: 'they tempted and provoked the most High God, and kept not his testimonies;' the same Isaiah expresseth, 'they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit.' In Isaiah God is said to send the prophets; St. Paul, reporting it, saith the Holy Ghost sent them. St. Peter chargeth Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Spirit, and thence that he had lied to God: 'Ananias,' saith he, 'why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?' Presently he subjoins, 'Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God;' he plainly by those names designeth the same things, and more than intimates it to be the same thing to lie to God, and to lie to the Spirit. Our Lord, as man, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and for that reason was the Son of God. 'The Holy Ghost,' said the angel, 'shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' What consequence were there of this, if the Holy Ghost were not God? Our Lord also is said to perform his miracles by the power of God, and by the power of the Holy Ghost indifferently: 'If I,' saith he in Matthew, 'by the Spirit of God cast out devils.' In Saint Luke he saith, 'If I by the finger (that is by the power) of God cast out devils;' and both phrases St. Paul doth equipollently express by the power of the Holy Ghost; and St. Peter says, that God did miracles by him. The Holy Scripture, because dictated by the Holy Spirit, is said to be inspired by God. The Spirit spake in the prophets,

(saith St. Peter, and the other holy writers commonly.) God spake in them, saith the apostle to the Hebrews, and others likewise, so often as the Holy Scripture is called the word of God. The Holy Spirit doth shed abroad and work charity in our hearts: we are thence said to be taught by God to love one another, yea, every virtue, all holiness is promiscuously ascribed to God and the Holy Ghost, as its immediate authors. To be led by the Spirit of God, and God worketh in us to will and to do, do signify the same thing. Every faithful Christian is therefore called a temple (that is a place consecrated to God), because the Holy Spirit in a special manner is present in him. 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' saith St. Paul in our text, 'know ye not that ye are God's temple?' whence should we know it? from hence, that God's Spirit inhabiteth you, because the inhabitation of the Spirit is the same with the inhabitation of God.

"To the Holy Spirit are most expressly attributed all the incomparable perfections of God, the essential characters and properties of the Divine nature. The very epithet of holy (absolutely, in way of excellence characteristically put) is one of them: for (as it is in Hannah's song) 'There is none holy as the Lord, neither is there any beside thee;' there is none beside God absolutely and perfectly holy (that is by a most remote distance severed from all things, far exalted above all things, peculiarly venerable and august in majesty), whence 'the Holy One' is a distinctive title of God. Yea the name of Spirit itself (absolutely and eminently put, and so importing highest purity and perfectest actuality), doth seem to imply the same. Also eternity, immensity, omniscience, omnipotency (than which no more high perfections, or more proper to God, can be conceived), are attributed to the Holy Spirit. Eternity, for the Apostle to the Hebrews calls him the

Eternal Spirit. 'How much more,' saith he, 'shall the blood of Christ, who, by the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience?' Immensity, 'Whither,' saith the Psalmist, 'shall I go from thy Spirit? and whither shall I fly from thy face.' The question involveth a negation, and signifieth a manifest reason thereof. I cannot fly any whither from thy Spirit, because it is everywhere present. Omniscience, 'The Spirit,' saith St. Paul, 'searcheth all things' (that is, it perfectly comprehendeth all things, which God knows or which can be known), 'even the deep things of God,' the depths or the deepest things of God, even those things which, to comprehend, doth as far exceed the condition of a creature, as it goeth beyond the capacity of one man to discern the cogitations and affections of another man, for such a comparison St. Paul doth make."

Having quoted the above from Barrow, we cannot conclude the subject better than by adding the following excellent passage from another sermon of the same author, on the Trinity. "We should mind him (the Holy Spirit), as the root of all good fruits growing in us, or sprouting from us; the producer of all good habits formed in us; the assister of all good works performed by us; the spring of all true content that we enjoy; to whom our embracing the faith, our continuing in hope, our working in charity, the purification of our hearts, the mortification of our lusts, the sanctification of our lives, the salvation of our souls, are principally due, are most justly ascribed; as the author and preserver of so inestimable benefits unto us, let us mind him; and withal let us consider him as condescending to be a loving friend, and constant guest to so mean and unworthy creatures; vouchsafing to attend over us, to converse with us, to dwell in us, rendering our souls holy temples of his Divinity, royal thrones of his Majesty, and bright orbs of his heavenly Light."

VII. It is the tendency of the renewed nature continually to increase in strength. The inward opposition and warfare has of itself the tendency, by the series of victories which are promised to the believer, to rivet the divinely implanted principle, and to extend its authority. The continual contest precludes it from being stationary—there can be no neutrality in the mind—the old and the new principle are so opposed to each other, that if they are active they must be combating. Knowledge has a tendency to grow—one step leads on to another—the spiritual affections increase also by exercise, and by new displays of the Divine goodness, and by the frequent view of the realities of eternity. Sin, too, is better known in all its bearings, and the body of sin ought in some measure to have been mortified and subdued. But, alas! in the midst of all the promises and preparations for victory, and with a provision of heavenly armor, a Christian soldier in general declines the combat, and is contented with an indolent repose instead of a triumph. Many are waiting for supernatural power, not to assist them, but to supersede their own endeavors, and few seem to understand that all things are ready for sanctification as well as justification, and that it is through their own exertions, and not without them, that the Spirit and the word operate in the completion of the Christian character.

VIII. If the helps in the Divine life are great, the mistakes and obstacles are also numerous and important. The chief mistake consists in the ignorance of what religion actually is. Many mistake for experience, all the sensations they experience, and think a number of various impressions equivalent to being deeply impressed with religion. But religion is neither more nor less than conformity to the Divine character and will—it is having the heart fixed on the Divine perfections, and the understanding enlightened by the Divine truth. Others mistake a

part for the whole, and though partially right, are yet very generally wrong, while they wish to establish some peculiar truth or single affection to be the essence of religion, and neglect the just proportion and harmony of the system. Obstacles and difficulties when they are capitulated with, or receded from, do indeed interrupt the progress of the Christian life, but when met and overcome, they greatly contribute to its advancement, and the powers which they call forth, remain after the struggle is over.

IX. Very many of the difficulties of religion have arisen from the ignorance or the neglect of that great moral law which regulates passive impressions and active habits. This world is strongly marked out as a state of trial. On this supposition most of the difficulties and moral obliquities observable in it vanish, and without it the system of Providence is altogether dark and unaccountable. The formation of character is the great object which is carrying on in this present world. The time for probation is short, and the trial is still shorter than the time which it appears to occupy. There is an evanescence in our moral principles when they are not rightly employed. Conscience at first so sensitive whenever it is well informed of duty, and awakened by truth; by resistance, soon becomes hardened, and by long resistance, altogether seared and insensible. When feelings do not lead to their appropriate actions, these feelings become morbid, and can only be extraordinarily excited—they require stronger and stronger stimulants. A religion of mere feelings can never be a permanent state of religion, and at last it must seek the excitement of novelty in preference to the worn out action of truth upon the mind. Mere benevolent feelings, when indulged without the exercise of beneficence, form not a benevolent but a hard-hearted, or at best a capricious character—and sentimental writers have had no sentiment but that of indifference

for those who immediately surrounded them, reserving their finer feelings unworn by the tear and wear of this world for beings of air, or inhabitants of Utopia. But the only way to keep up the freshness of the affections, and the youth of the heart, is to let them freely flow over the activities of life, and from action to circulate back to their fountain head; that the stream of benevolence may issue and re-issue from the heart in a ceaseless circle.

X. Acting upon principles is the only way to strengthen them—no power of thought can of itself give force to the character—the mind of the strongest wing can find no resting place till it returns to its home in the world around it, and to those duties which it is actually required to fulfil. The primitive Christians had been suddenly called out of darkness into marvellous light, and their eyes were still dazzled with its splendor, so as to discern many objects but indistinctly. Their excellence consisted not in knowledge but in decision. They were continually required to choose between time and eternity—between the visible and invisible. They had nothing but the exercise of faith to oppose to the presence of trials which everywhere beset them. Yet their joy was great, for it is the struggle and not the sacrifice which is painful, and the more of this world that is given up, the larger is the foretaste of heavenly joy.

XI. All the doctrines of Christianity have a practical aspect, and it is not from the heights of speculation, but from the point of practice that they are most clearly discerned. Other systems are easiest in theory. The mind in speculation runs smoothly over their different parts, they fit into each other elaborately, and the whole work appears highly finished. But bring them into practice, and the charm immediately is dissolved. There all their difficulties begin, and there the difficulties of Christianity all end. Whatever difficulties have been suggested with

regard to Christianity, they are entirely speculative; they were made by men who had no mind to practise the religion they opposed. But none who with intelligence have brought Christianity to bear on life, have ever complained that they found any blank in its action, or any of their wants unfurnished. If acting, they were abundantly supplied with strength; and if suffering, with consolation.

XII. It is by a life and opinions conformable to the truth that we best illustrate Christianity to ourselves and others, and enter most deeply into its spirit. It is in vain to suppose that by holding the truth in our heads, and rejecting it from our lives, we can keep up a state of mind that even approaches to neutrality. Action has much more power over us than evidence. He that lives as if there were no other world, even if he repeated each day a demonstration of its existence, will soon come to believe, as well as to act, as if this world were all. But it is not only a course of life or some particular action contrary to the truth, which is unfavorable to the influence of truth over our minds, but even the assenting to erroneous opinions in smaller matters, is injurious to the heavenly life of the soul. How easily do Christians glide into the belief of those around them, that those things are good in themselves, and desirable possessions, which the world esteems good, such as wealth, and health, and elevated station, tacitly forgetting that these are not even transient gifts, but merely loans, of which the interest will soon be rigorously exacted. There are many opinions current among believers which are not brought under control of the truth. Religion not being made to cast its light upon the whole of life, the darkness which is left undisturbed often spreads beyond the corners which are assigned to it, and our views upon more important subjects are to a certain degree scriptural, while we speak upon minor points with less truth than the heathen philosophers. If the word of

God is studied, his works are too often neglected; the wonders of nature are relinquished, as a hopeless and unimproving subject, to mere natural men, and the truth is thus narrowed in its operation, and God is disregarded in the marvels of his creation, which disregard meets with its due consequence in the errors which arise from such neglect.

XIII. Sanctification has its perfect work in producing entire conformity to the character and to the will of God. Without this there can be no happiness. His will must be done, nor does anything oppose it except the perverted wills of fallen creatures, which must be crushed in every direction, in the unequal contest. There is no alternative between being overwhelmed by the irresistible exercise of the Divine attributes, and being conformed to the Divine mind which exerts them, and rejoicing in their glorious manifestation. To a mind thus renovated and transformed, the whole of existence becomes a boundless field of exultation. It beholds the character which it admires resplendently reflected wherever it turns its view, and it feels a large share of that Divine pleasure which the author of nature expresses when he surveys his works and pronounces them to be good. The sanctified mind becomes a priest and a king unto God, offering up praises to Him in the view of all the Divine operations, and is crowned as a co-ruler in the ordering of events, being admitted into the spirit of the Divine plans, and having its will accompanying the Divine will in all its goings forth, for the communication of endless happiness, and the display of the Divine glory.

XIV. The sum of sanctification is this. We are sanctified by faith. Faith rests simply on the word of God, and the word of God bears throughout testimony to Jesus. By abiding in Christ's words we abide in him, derive from him our new head, the origin and the increase of a holy

existence, and become "partakers of the Divine nature." It remains then that we live by faith and not by sight, that we live not upon bread alone, but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God. Hence the study of the word of God is the great instrument of growth in grace; without that guiding light we should be continually drawn out of the right path in pursuit of false and unsubstantial shows of perfection. In the Scriptures we have the character of Christ, the only faultless pattern, and of the Apostles who followed hard after his footsteps, that believers in after ages might be followers of them as they were of Christ. And not only do we behold the Divine glory in the character of Jesus, the very beholding of it by faith has of itself a transforming efficacy, "we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Our dependance on the Saviour is not like our relation to Adam, a connection natural and involuntary, it is the dependence of intelligence and choice. As salvation begins in it, so it must be carried on by it. It is by having our understandings filled with the glory of his character, and by having our hearts more enlarged by increasing discoveries of his goodness and infinite love, that we can proceed from strength to strength. The only genuine growth in grace must be derived from more closely holding the head, "from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

One great obstacle to eminence in the Divine life among believers is ignorance of the Scriptures as a whole. They are chiefly known and quoted in detached passages, separated from the general scope and spirit of the context, not seldom with a wrong application, and frequently with some human commentary, obscuring if not misrepresent-

ing the Divine and original sense. For this reason and for many others, it is extremely desirable that the ground of all public teaching should be to make the hearers acquainted with the word of God in its purity and integrity, and hence the great advantage of lectures, if they were kept more distinct from sermons. The first and vital object is to make the hearers intelligent readers of the Bible by themselves, not exhausting their interest by saying all that can be said with propriety upon any particular passage, but opening out to them the scope and general design of the sacred writers, entering into the main stream of inspired argument, and rapidly clearing away some of the main difficulties which time and a change of customs and languages has occasioned. Without this general comprehension of the structure of the Bible, and an intelligent interest in its contents throughout, Christians can never be expected to be rooted and grounded in the faith, but will ever be liable to be blown about by every wind of doctrine.

It is remarkable, that most of the erroneous opinions which at present prevail, may be traced to the neglect of some portion of the Scripture, or of some inspired truth. That which was at first neglected is afterwards exaggerated; some patron is sooner or later found for it, who neglects all other truth to do it homage, and who, on the other hand, is regarded almost as the founder of a new religion by his opponents, whose previous neglect may be traced as the first source of the hurtful dispute. To this cause may be attributed many of the late and present contentions concerning assurance of faith, pardon of sin, and the interpretation of prophecy.

It is not only necessary that knowledge should grow with an increasing insight into the oracles of God, but that all the affections of the soul, united to scriptural knowledge, should have their free and perfect exercise.

Hatred of sin, fear of God, (holy fear of him as the righteous governor of the world, filial fear of him as our heavenly and reconciled father,) trust, joy, love, and hope, these are the very essence and life of religion when excited by their proper objects, and conformably to the truth of the Scriptures. But this subject has been most amply and satisfactorily treated of by Edwards on the Religious Affections, though somewhat lengthy, according to the American phrase, and with some rather important mistakes on the subject of assurance. It is to be regretted that his style should be so little adapted to stir up the affections, but all gifts are not given to all men, and he himself has been amply furnished, in many other respects, by the Father of Lights. It is not every teacher who is enabled to touch the heart; slight and transient sensibility may be easily excited, but the deep tide of the passions is, perhaps fortunately, not to be raised at every one's control. The Bible, however, supplies all other deficiences, and it is impossible to read it with much faith and prayer without having our hearts burning within us, while we listen to the words of the Saviour.

As the mere possession of knowledge, without having the heart affected by the truth, produces the most hardened of all states of mind, so knowledge along with the religious affections, without a life conformable to the truth, and without the fruits of Christianity apparent in our actions, would form a wavering and unsettled disposition, sometimes elevated sometimes depressed, often worn out and indifferent to the impressions of divine truth, and never proceeding in a steady and regular advancement towards the perfection of the Christian character. The affections consume themselves, and the more vehement their heat the sooner it is exhausted, if not fixed into permanent principle by action and habit. Truth alone,

brought into action, can form the character and mould the mind.

Perhaps there is no passage that throws more light upon the progress of sanctification than the comment by Bolingbroke upon Bacon which we partially quoted before, and which, as it may be considered superior to all the rest of Bolingbroke's works taken together, shall here be transcribed entire. "There is not a deeper nor a finer observation in all my Lord Bacon's works than one which I shall apply and paraphrase on this occasion. The most compendious, the most noble, and the most effectual remedy, which can be opposed to the uncertain and irregular motions of the human mind, agitated by various passions, allured by various temptations, inclining sometimes towards a state of moral perfection, and oftener even in the best, towards a state of moral depravation, is this. We must choose betimes such virtuous objects as are proportioned to the means we have of pursuing them, and as belong particularly to the stations we are in, and to the duties of those stations. We must determine and fix our minds in such manner upon them, that the pursuit of them may become the business, and the attainment of them the end of our whole lives. Thus we shall imitate the great operations of nature, and not the feeble, slow, and imperfect operations of art. We must not proceed in forming the moral character, as a statuary proceeds in forming a statue, who works sometimes on the face, sometimes on one part, and sometimes on another: but we must proceed, and it is in our power to proceed, as nature does in forming a flower, an animal, or any other of her productions; *rudimenta partium omnium simul parit et producit.* 'She throws out altogether, and at once, the whole system of every being, and the rudiments of all the parts.' The vegetable or the animal grows in bulk, and increases in strength; but is the same from the first."

It is from the ignorance of the great law of the decay of passive impressions, and the increase of active habits that many of the mistakes with regard to experimental religion proceed. In the first dawn of the religious life it is not so much the truth itself as the impression which the novelty of the truth makes upon our minds which is chiefly attended to. Accordingly this impression is thought to constitute the principal part of religion, and the great object is to retain and to increase it. But in pursuit of this object the most speedy course is taken to deaden that sensibility by the very means by which it is sought to be retained. The continual repetition of these passive impressions is the true method of entirely wearing them out. Then when truth can no longer excite the mind, novelty and exaggeration are naturally sought after to supply its place. Hence that fickleness in religious opinions, and those perpetual changes which the subjects of them are pleased successively to denominate conversions, and hence one new teacher after another is complimented by the same set of disciples, with bringing those out of darkness into light, who are ever learning and never coming to the stable and assured knowledge of the truth.

Let us not however undervalue strong impressions of religion upon the feelings, they are gratifying in themselves and highly useful as an impulse to enable us to proceed forward on our way. But the mind which seeks to rest in their barren contemplation and enjoyment will be miserably disappointed; they are but transitory refreshments on the journey, and only intended to lead us on to that better country of which they are slight foretastes. It cannot be too often repeated, that religion consists simply in conformity to the Divine will and likeness, and that other things may be pleasant accessaries but are not the essentials of our duty. Many are evidently seeking after comfort rather than truth, but the only true Com-

forter is the Holy Spirit, who comforts us by means of the truth, who lays a deep foundation for heavenly joy by first convincing us of sin, that we may receive with earnestness the glad tidings when he testifies of the Saviour, and that we may welcome the Redeemer with all holy gratitude and affection, when we consider from what wrath and misery he hath delivered us. Above all, the Holy Spirit comforts us not so much with things present as things to come, when he draws us forward with joyful expectation towards futurity, and fills all the desires of the mind with the approaching prospect of heaven—with a hope full of glory and immortality.

PART VIII.

HEAVEN.

1. All Fleeting and Passing away without Us. 2. All becoming Fixed and Unalterable within. 3. Proximity of Heaven to the Believer. 4. The Believer saved by Hope. 5. Preparation of Heaven for the Believer. 6. Heaven the Rest and End of Existence. 7. Love of Life becomes the Love of Holiness. 8. Love of the Creator and Creation. 9. Love of the Saviour. 10. The Order and the Society of Heaven.

I. All things below are marked with the impress of a future and unchangeable state. Every thing is fleeting in itself, and permanent in its consequences.

As every being forms but a link in the extended chain of existence, so all the changes around us are passing into other changes till the series of vicissitudes is complete, and the transitory scenery of this world is shifted away. So rapidly are we hurried forwards to futurity, that we cannot realize present time, and we can only think of it as a movable line between two eternities, that which is past, and that which is to come. Far from being able to retain possession of the moments that are so rapidly departing from us, our life in the continuance of its course, is severing us from all that is worth living for, not only from external advantages, but even the endowments of the mind which we would identify with ourselves; all that

remains to us is the result of time spent or mispent, and the expectation or the dread of Divine retribution. If man is regardless of the boundless ages of futurity, it is not from their being unfrequently suggested to his notice. Time, which mingles in every train of our thoughts, leads the mind as necessarily to eternity, as the course of a river conducts us to its termination in the ocean. The lapse of duration, without some sensible measure of it, would escape by the silence of its course from our observation. But not only do the changes around us warn us of our own approaching and final change, but the heavenly bodies are continual remembrancers to man of the shortness of his narrow existence, while they lead his thoughts onwards to the infinity of duration as well as of space; and while in their lesser movements they are for signs and for seasons, for days and for years, in their larger revolutions they carry on the mind at once into new and undiscovered heavens, and into the vast and never ending cycles of eternity.

There is a striking anomaly to the other benevolent provisions of a Deity, (so profusely discoverable in the works of creation,) in the apparent evanescence of pleasure, and the seeming endurance of pain. Had pleasures appeared to last longer than they actually do, and pains to be shorter than they really are, the final purpose of this arrangement would have been more easily perceived; but the opposite moral constitution suits well with the transitory and probationary state of man upon earth. Prolonged pleasures, upon which the soul would repose, are ill-suited to the progress of its pilgrimage, and pains which are intended for warnings appear greater than they are; and the dread of them, and consequently the impulse derived from them, is increased without increasing the amount of actual suffering. Hope is enduring though joy be fleeting, and it is less the presence of pain than the dread of future

evil, which makes the soul desire to flee away and be at rest in that better country, where all tears shall be wiped away from all eyes. Thus while eternity is hastening forwards to receive the perishing race of men into its immeasurable regions, the mind of man, from its peculiar constitution, is pressing forward on its part to meet the advances of futurity, and hope and fear become the two wings with which the renovated soul steers her flight to immortal life.

II. While all earthly things are fleeting in themselves, they are permanent in their consequences. No length of time can efface guilt, and when the sinner is departed to another world, he leaves the consequences of his transgressions behind him like seeds scattered to the winds, which spread and multiply in uninterrupted succession. The sin of our first parent affects his remotest posterity. Genius embalms the vices of former ages, and spreads the glow of the same evil passions through distant time. Life is short, but the consequences of evil example are without any definite term, and the reflection of how imperishable is the result of our moral conduct, may lead us to exclaim with deep feeling, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." While futurity is thus opening upon us, both by the speedy flight of time, and by the rapid preparation which is going on within us for an unchangeable destiny, fearful is the aspect which the gospel wears to those who neglect so great salvation.

In lands where the gospel is unknown, where there is nothing but a vague expectation of immortality, and where the laws that regulate that immortality are beyond the efforts of unassisted nature to discover, the uncertainty of our fate, while it gives ample room to fears, gives also scope for more cheerful anticipations, and to the heathen, unenlightened by revelation, the shadowy world of futurity grows either darker or brighter according to the temper

of their minds, and the turn of their thoughts. But Christianity leaves nothing to fortune or conjecture. Futurity is arranged according to pre-established rules, and we know the judgment seat at which we must appear, and the law by which we must be tried. The immense work which God has accomplished, the ultimate effort of infinite love and infinite power, is freely offered to the acceptance of creatures who are rapidly passing through the transitory imagery of this world to their final doom. Alas! it is but too evident amongst many, that life is drawing near to a close without one single purpose for which it was given to them being effected; that evil passions are cherished and matured into full strength; that habits of opposition to God, and to his character, and his will, have become more than a second nature, and that the Divine remedy, which alone is adequate to remove these evils, is slighted, and rejected, and ultimately forgotten. The countenance is not more unalterably taking those lines of expression which cannot be effaced, than the mind is subjecting itself to those passions and thoughts which, if Divine grace prevent not, must be its companions forever.

On the other hand, those who are preparing for heaven, are brought, even upon earth, into an ever increasing conformity to the character of God, they are cast into the mould of the gospel, and receive imprinted anew upon their souls the Divine image. With the ruling desire in their minds of "Father, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;" earth, even amidst its sins and sorrows, becomes a foretaste of heaven; and the joy and peace in the Holy Spirit, which are the essentials of religious experience upon earth, are the dawn of that fullness of joy which they shall possess in the presence of God.

III. Heaven is thus near to the believer, both in nature and in time. It becomes his country and his home, he is conformed to its sentiments, and to its enjoyments. Nor

is the time distant when he will enter upon the clear view of its glories.

It is the great error and misfortune of the believer to consider heaven more remote than it really is. Whatever is not arrayed in sensible imagery, appears dim to our earthly understanding, and whatever seems dim, seems also to be distant. On the contrary, this present life, being filled with the unreal shapes of imagination, seems stretching out into a magnitude far beyond its just dimensions. Its very vacancy and uncertainty are what constitute its imaginary value. Had we a greater length of life, and a larger share of prosperity assigned to us than has been the lot of any other mortals, yet we should be less affected by these advantages, if they were exactly stated to us, than by our own precarious and undefined existence. We look back upon the past as nothing, but the future, because indefinite, seems also to be infinite, and the short period and prospect before us swells out into larger size and expectation than the barren tract of years we have passed over.

Would we look to the future with the same sober and true regard as to the past, and behold heaven somewhat as near to the believer as it actually is, we must recall our imagination and our hopes from the pursuit of the flitting and deceptive shadows of this world, and direct them to those glories which are soon to be fully revealed. We must recollect that nothing greatly desirable awaits us on this earth, between the present moment and death, except the favor of God; and that favor can only be uninterruptedly discerned by us when the remains of unbelief are destroyed, when we behold the Divine countenance without a cloud in the state of heavenly felicity. Christians, like kings, already possess all that this earth can afford them, all things are theirs, as far as conducive to their good. Without the heights of earthly ambition to

climb, there are no imaginary elevations interposed between us and the grave, as Madame de Stael observes, though with more fancy than justice, with respect to sovereigns: "Les difficultés de la vie se placent entre nous et la tombe, tout est aplani pour les rois jusqu' au terme, et cela même le rend plus visible à leurs yeux."

One apparent difficulty consists in heaven being not so much exhibited in the Bible to our imagination as held out to us as the boundless object of our hopes. It would be easier to meditate upon heaven, could we picture it as drawn with all the distinctness which Mohammed has conferred upon his paradise, or like the Elysiums of mystics, which occupy the mind with idle dreams. The greatness and the spirituality of the heavenly state, precludes its being conveyed to us in definite terms, and its infinite good, like the visions of glory revealed to Paul, makes it impossible to be uttered in the languages of men, even impossible to be adequately conceived by their narrow and circumscribed thoughts and desires. Hence the descriptions of heaven are conveyed to us chiefly in negatives; its boundless blessedness is beyond the narrow range of our faculties, but we may well understand and desire its entire freedom from evil, from sin, and from suffering.

IV. The believer is saved by hope as well as by faith. By faith he beholds the wonderful work that God has wrought out for him, he stands still, and sees the salvation of God. By hope he goes forward, and takes possession of the promised land. The world are living to an imaginary futurity, it is not what they already possess which fascinates them, but that which they yet expect to attain. All the Christian is required to change in this case, is to recall those hopes which are ever active in man, to desert the shadow, that he may press forward to obtain the substance, and to live to a real futurity instead of an imaginary one.

And how great is the privilege of looking beyond this

present evil world; in the midst of labors of anticipating rest, and in the heat and pressure of the conflict to triumph beforehand in the certainty of victory! A religion without hope would be a religion without animation, without comfort and without progress. It is the attractive influence of the heavenly rest, that draws the mind forward to seek with fervor for the inheritance of the saints in light, and which has a peculiar force in assimilating it to the holy society with which it will soon be forever united. Such is the heavenly spirit observable in those who meditate much on the heavenly state, and which is so eminent in Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest. Happy would we be, if, like him, we could spend "the twilight" of each day in meditating on the unsetting splendors of eternity, and visit in thought that land where there is no need of the sun and moon, "for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Heaven is the only object on which the hopes of the believer can reasonably rest; he feels a continual opposition and struggle within himself to his renewed nature, and to the Divine will; and he well knows that there is no release from that warfare in this life, and that even were he blessed on earth with the highest degree of prosperity, he has that within him which might turn that prosperity into poison. The Christian must live by hope; the atmosphere of this world is not vital air to the believer; like the diver he must subsist by continual supplies transmitted down to him from a higher element. He feels himself here in an uncongenial climate, and longs for that better country, where his renovated existence may expand itself, and where it is as natural to live as here it is to die,—the native country of knowledge and virtue, and freedom, where he and his friends, who are here but exiles, find their home,—the land that is very far off, but where the King appears in his beauty, and where he has gathered

together the hosts of his faithful servants, that they may behold his glory and surround his throne.

V. God, in the ordinary works of creation, speaks and it is done. "Let there be light, and there was light." But to represent the importance of some of his works, the Godhead is represented as deliberating before proceeding to creation; "and God said, Let us make man after our image, in our likeness." And thus to denote the august abodes that await the blessed after death, Christ himself goes beforehand to prepare a place for his disciples, and heaven is represented as a city whose builder and maker is God. The earth is as nothing before him, but the heavens, even in the eyes of him who fills immensity, are represented as spacious, "In my Father's house are many mansions," and as adorned and glorious even in the Divine estimation.

God makes all things double, as we have before remarked; the eye for light and light for the eye. While he is preparing the character of the believer for heaven, he is also preparing heaven for the believer; and the believer himself is laying up treasures in heaven, which can never be taken away from him, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Every step of advancement in holiness upon earth is an acquisition that will last to him throughout eternity. He is not only gaining in heavenly wealth, but in heavenly adaptation. Here those who walk by faith are opposed to those who walk by sight, the new nature is opposed to the old, and the mind of the believer is divided against itself; as St. Paul expresses it, "ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." "We groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." But when the trial is over, and the

principle of holiness perfected, faith and sight will be reconciled and united. Then they who believed in him whom they have not seen, shall see him in whom they have believed. And they who now see but a small portion of the Divine foot-prints in creation shall then see the Divinity manifesting itself in its fullness, flowing out into acts of divine energy, and filling with inexhaustible happiness the capacities of numberless creatures.

VI. This earth is but the scaffolding of creation. Here we behold preparations, but no complete performance, innumerable means, but no ultimate end. The gaining of one acquisition is but a step to the pursuit of another; and our minds are so constituted in accordance to the world in which we live, that all our pleasures arise not from possession, but from progress. Thus, all our aspirations, and all our pursuits have a tendency to press forward beyond the visible sphere of this world's affairs, and may enable the Christian to rise above the changes of this sublunary scene, to where life reposes in the height of enjoyment, and in the fullness of attainment.

Not that the heavenly state excludes an infinite progression, all who enter heaven are undoubtedly full of bliss to the utmost extent of their capacity, but that capacity, whatsoever it may be, is capable of ceaseless enlargement in its endless approximation to absolute and Divine perfection. We must beware, indeed, that we do not carry the notions of our earthly life into our speculations on the life of heaven, and confuse the peculiarities of the state of trial, and of progressive holiness, with an existence of perfection and rest. But the Scriptures reveal to us that even the glorified intelligences derive an increase of knowledge and of insight into the Divine character from contemplating the wonders of redeeming love, and if an increase of knowledge, then an increase of happiness also. The more of the Divine glory they behold,

the more they must be changed into that glory, for such are the effects of the beatific vision of God.

God alone contains in himself the absolute fullness of existence, he fills and possesses and unites into his own everlasting now, the past, and the future eternity; or rather these eternities are but the shadows of his illimitable existence. But creatures, however glorified and excellent, are necessarily finite in all things, and can possess but a finite portion of duration. Their eternity consists in ever renewed additions of time, in ages beyond ages without end. God can receive no additions to his existence. Man, in his frail and fleeting life, loses as rapidly as he gains. But the spirits of just men made perfect, united to the source of life, can lose nothing, and are continually gaining; their stream of existence is forever flowing, and continually enlarging as it flows.

VII. The love of life, which is upon earth so often but the love of wretchedness and guilt—the clinging to disordered passions and unlawful enjoyments—will then be a reasonable and Divine instinct—the exultation in existence which God has largely endowed with power and blessed with happiness, and sanctified to his own service in his perpetual presence. The mystery of finite existence will have the clouds rolled away from it, and the mind will bask in the light and sunshine of the Divine favor and communion. The soul shall drink its fill—where the rivers of pleasure join the waters of life fast by the throne of God—where existence is not crammed and circumscribed, not fleeting and shadowy, but solid and unending—where no portion of it is spent, but where the tide of life is ever at the full; and where, though ever flowing, it approaches no nearer to a bourne,

> "Quod neque clara suo percurrere flumina cursu
> Perpetuo possint ævi labentia tractu:
> Nec prorsum facere, ut restet minus ire, meando."

VIII. The love of God especially constitutes heaven—the full exercise of our love to him in all the power of our being, and the intuition of his love to us flowing towards us without limit and without end. There we shall have as intimate a consciousness of the Divine existence as of our own—a consciousness forever abiding with us, and impossible to be set aside. We shall behold God everywhere, and behold him continually doing us good—the inexhaustible fountain of all we feel, and all we see. The sun is but a faint emblem of the Deity, confined as it is to a spot, and extending its influence only over the immediately surrounding matter; but to dwell in the midst of the illimitable uncreated Sun, and to be penetrated by its creative rays, is the happiness of all the children of God. If they turn their eyes to the creatures, the reflected radiance shows God still present, and that it is the excellence of the creatures to reflect his excellence who made them. As God everywhere exists, so they are conscious of his existence everywhere—his glory rests upon every creature—his presence dwells in every thought.

IX. But that glory rests with peculiar mildness on the face of the Saviour, on him who is perfect God and perfect man—the Creator and the example of all worlds, with whom the Father is ever well pleased. In heaven the blessed behold him dwelling in God and God in him; in him they behold the infinite still unlimited, and yet brought nearer to the finite though glorified intelligences of the creatures. And as Christ is one with God, so are the believers one with him; partakers through him of the Divine nature, and fellow heirs of that kingdom, the excellence of which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou

hast given me." "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." "And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."

X. The love that flows out towards God will circulate back upon the heavenly hosts, who all are invested with the Divine likeness, and sealed with the Divine Spirit; reflecting in their various orders and gradations some portion of the glory of the Eternal mind. As all the portions of matter throughout the unnumbered worlds, thinly scattered through space, act each upon all, and all upon each, however distant from each other, so the hosts upon hosts of minds are all united by the Divine union which links them together, and by that heavenly love which constitutes the system of their movements and of their being—a society not like the imperfect associations of the earth, but intimate and eternal—the ceaseless and all circling action of mind upon mind. While the glorified spirits of just men now made perfect, have the still more intimate communion, of not only being redeemed by the blood of the Saviour, and of being brought exceedingly nigh to God through him, but of having their place and condition in heaven itself, depending upon their mutual relations upon earth, and upon their having been made the instruments of salvation to each other; one proclaiming the glad tidings, and another taking up the joyful sound, from the first foundation of the Church, till the last of the elect was gathered in. All are thus peculiarly and mutually related, and all enjoy the united fruits of their labors, and the benefactor and the benefited exult together in the same everlasting harvest; each glorified spirit shining like the sun in his strength, an orb of intellectual light, and each, like the stars, those types of the hosts of the

invisible heavens, moving with clusters of other suns, and with the aggregation of systems, involved into other systems, in vast and progressive cycles round the Centre of the universe.

NOTES.

[Note A.]

The inductive philosophy of the mind is but of yesterday, nor is it likely, as far as present appearances go, to make any rapid progress. Far from being generally followed, it is not even generally comprehended, and the habits of the age are totally averse from severe and patient thought. In Germany, where more pretences are made to the energetic exercise of the intellect, it is the imagination and not the intellect which is called into action, and a number of shadowy abstractions are mistaken for realities. But it is much easier to dispute forever concerning the absolute and the relative, the finite and the infinite, than to displace the imagery either of dim abstractions or of more sensible similitudes, (which so readily delude the metaphysician,) and patiently to examine and analyze our complex mental operations. Were the structure of the mind better known, as it is the most wonderful work of God, so it would afford the most striking instances of his skill. Even at present we may see in its peculiar organization, as far as discovered, not only the proofs of Divine wisdom, but the intention of its Maker, manifested from the first of its operations upwards, that the mind of man should know and worship its Creator. This is intended to be shown at length in a future sketch of the philosophy of the mind.

[Note B.]

All words have originally a reference to sensible objects, as the only objects which, previous to language, there could be any agreement about, or any use of giving names to. It

is evident that the name for the Deity amongst most tribes must be taken from the sun, or from the heavens, and must be equally applicable to the visible residence, or to the presiding genius which was supposed to inhabit it. Hence happens a common mistake amongst those imperfectly acquainted with rude language, that there is no other object of worship than the material element to which the name of deity is most frequently applied. And should there be no outward system of rites, which is often the case, where there is no established order of priesthood, or when that priesthood has been long destroyed, a traveller might, with some apparent reason, conclude that the nation of whose language he knew but little, and of whose turn of thought he was altogether ignorant, were possessed of no notion of any superior power. However, even amidst those tribes, might still be observed customs or opinions which mark that superstition had formerly prevailed among them. Thus, invocations to former deities survive as charms or spells, and the incantations of the rain-maker, though they may not be addressed to any definite object of worship, are derived from former periods, when the ruler of the sky was solemnly invoked to bestow his fertilizing showers. The creed of the Hottentots has left a fragment of its ancient sway over the mind, in the absurd and obscure fable, which they still retain, of the loss of the immortality of the soul. No tribe could be pitched upon that did not show either directly or indirectly that man, like the Athenians, was a worshipper of intelligence superior to his own. And the same tendency is equally visible in the sophist, whose fund of credulity and superstition, no longer directed towards a false Deity, is expended on still more imaginary terrors.

Forms of superstition the most uncouth spring up where an established creed has been swept away, and if we sought for instances of the greatest weakness and credulity, we should find them in the age and country of atheists, rising up amidst the decline of the Roman empire, again amidst the very general disbelief that preceded the reformation in Italy, and lastly, in the writings and credulity of the French, previous to, and during the Revolution, whether we regard the specu-

lative opinions of those who endeavored to account for the origin and government of the world without a revelation, or listen to the absurd hopes and terrors of the multitude, who, deprived of religion, created to themselves the most unreal phantoms of good and evil.

[Note C.]

Design in creation has been receiving fresh illustration since the time of Cicero and Galen, and that increase has been rapidly augmenting in latter ages. What a difference between Derham and Paley! and even since the time of Paley, though so short a period has passed since his Natural Theology was written, and though in it he has seized with admirable force on the more prominent proofs for the existence of God, yet what a variety of new instances of Divine skill have been discovered in the remoter walks of knowledge! The arguments now derived from the works of the Creator to prove his existence are very different in their amount and force from what they were in the first ages of the world. The proof of the Divine existence is immense, and can never be exhausted; the generations of mankind, whatever may be the length of their succession, will ever be discovering new foot-prints of the Deity in creation.

Some of the higher arguments for the being of God have been well stated by Clarke, in his work on the Divine attributes, though his line of reasoning requires repairs and occasional alteration; for instance, his reasoning in support of the unity of God is decidedly defective. Paley has done ample justice to the lower and more practical course of proof, though, as discoveries advance, portions of his work might require occasionally to be recast. Paley, however, is as deficient in the higher exercise of reasoning, as Clarke is in facts and popular instances. A work which would come as near to perfection, as the subject, which is boundless, would

admit of, must unite the precision of minute investigation, to the magnificence which the argument for a Deity derives from the contemplation of general nature. In this the ancient theists excelled, notwithstanding their many errors.

[Note **D.**]

The hopes of mankind, with respect to futurity, have always been less vivid than their fears; their pictures of Elysium have been shadowy and powerless, compared with the substantial gloom of Tartarus. Immortality and punishment seem nearly synonymous with Lucretius, when he presses upon his readers the mortality of the soul, as the only antidote to the fear of death.

"Æternas pœnas quoniam in morte timendum est."

It gives us a striking view of the condition of human nature, when conscience is only known as a deterring, and not as an impelling power. The demon of Socrates, according to his own account, only dissuaded him, never incited him to action. And here it may be remarked, that it was chiefly by the attention he gave to conscience, and its intimations, which, from the vivid force with which they were communicated to him, he personified as a demon, or intelligence outward to himself, that Socrates stamped upon his philosophy its peculiar character. Upon this basis he rested his belief of an existence beyond the grave, which, though clouded by the skepticism that was natural to him, seemed a clear motive for choice and action, whenever he contemplated things in the moral point of view. And, no doubt, had the other philosophers of Greece attended more to the dictates of conscience, and less to the operations of the mere reasoning faculty, unfurnished as it was among them with the right data to proceed upon, ancient philosophy would have worn a still nobler aspect, and might have cast deeper roots, instead of being ever blown about with every wind of doctrine.

[Note E.]

No dogma of superstition was ever received with blinder credulity and submission than Hume's Essay on Miracles has been by the common herd of infidels; yet in no equal space could there anywhere be found such an accumulation of blunders. Every one who has tried his skill in refuting it has detected some fallacy. But the whole is a fallacy from beginning to end, as shall be pointed out at some length in the Errors regarding Religion. The essay does not contain the author's real opinions; it is his exoteric, not his esoteric doctrine. The passage in Hume referred to is the following, which he calls "a general maxim, worthy of our attention:" —"That no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish; and, even in that case, there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force which remains after deducting the inferior." Had Hume adhered to his own absurd test, he would still have been a Christian.

[Note F.]

In addition to the external evidences already touched on, there are, as Leslie has proved, with much brevity and force, those silent but perpetual witnesses, the institutions which commemorate the doctrine and facts of the Jewish and the Christian religion,—above all, the Lord's Supper, which shows both Christ's death and resurrection, and which at once manifests the truth and the import of Christianity, until the Lord come again, to put an end to this transitory scenery of the world, and do away with all shadows and emblems, by revealing the realities of things. Independently of the great sources of evidence, there are innumerable smaller streams breaking out on every side. The argument pursued in the Horæ coincidences between the Acts, and the Epistles of Paul, may

Paulinæ, of proving the truth of religion by the undesigned be extended to the undesigned agreements between the four Gospels,* and also to the coincidences between the summary which Moses gives in Deuteronomy and the four former books of the law. This last work has been ably executed by Dr. Graves; and the argument from undesigned coincidences may be extended either in respect of facts, or, at least, with regard to doctrines, through all the books which form the volume of inspiration, while the direct evidence from testimony may be handled so variously, as to afford, in part at least, independent sources of argument and proof.

[Note G.]

Sandeman deserves praise as the first who utterly discarded all equivocal language in proclaiming the freeness of the gospel. But this praise is much diminished by his severity in animadverting upon the errors of former writers, errors in many cases merely verbal, which he exaggerated into grievous and fatal heresies. Though acute in detecting the mistakes of others, his own insight into the truth is not always very profound; he discerned the freeness of the gospel, at least in part, but knew little of its fullness and certainty. He was an ingenious and independent thinker, but, at the same time, a superficial and presumptuous one. What is most to be regretted, his temper was little imbued with the spirit of Christianity. The following admirable passage, (written in the character of a converted Jew, cotemporary with the Saviour,) in which he rises far above his ordinary level, though long, has been transcribed entire, not as being free from his characteristic faults, but as being more deeply

* A treatise on the veracity of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, argued from the *undesigned coincidences* between their respective writers, and between them and Josephus, was lately published by the Rev. J. J. Blunt. A reprint of this work has been published in this country, to which the American student of the evidences of Christianity is recommended for many ingenious and valuable remarks and illustrations.—Am. Ed.

stamped with original thought than any which could be produced on the same subject:—

"Had Jesus, when buried, like other mortals, remained in the grave, I had steadfastly adhered to the Pharisees, and gloried in being one of them, as being convinced that the grand controversy about righteousness, which was carried on with great zeal on both sides, was now fairly decided in their favor, and that they had gained an additional honor by the opposition.

"I received a liberal and virtuous education among the Sadducees, who admit no sense of our sacred writings but what they think agreeable to sound philosophy. But happening, about the time that Jesus made his appearance, to fall acquainted with some amiable men of eminent piety among the Pharisees, I began to conceive a liking to their party. I observed, that they maintained a more strict temperance, and, in general, a greater purity of life, and that they had more exalted sentiments about the power and character of God than the other party. I made it my business now to attend their lectures and study their tenets, in hopes of being found worthy to rank with them. Meantime the uncommon opposition shown to them by Jesus drew no small share of my attention, and served, on the whole, rather to increase than to diminish my attachment to them. I considered their sentiments as a great improvement of my former way of thinking, and highly conducive to my advancement in virtue as well as piety. I readily judged then, that the opposition which was chiefly pointed against what came nearest to perfection, behoved to flow from the worst of causes.

"I had a very low opinion of Jesus, as well as of the company he kept, on many accounts, which I shall not now take time to relate. In the general, I thought him a stranger to every great and noble sentiment which charms and elevates the mind of man. What disaffected me most to him was, I thought him uncharitable to the last degree. I could not reconcile with any degree of charity or piety the severe censures he passed upon men of the best established char-

acters. It gave me great disgust to hear him addressing the men whom I myself thought worthy of the highest esteem for every thing great and good, in such uncouth language as this, *How can ye escape the damnation of hell!* I thought it intolerable to hear him at the same time declaring, with singular assurance, that he himself was the only favorite of heaven; that every character of man but his own was the object of the Divine displeasure; yea, without stopping here, with the greatest familiarity calling God his Father, in a sense peculiar to himself, and without leaving us at any loss to gather his meaning, affirming, *The Father and I are one;* even while he showed rather more zeal than any of us against the least appearance of ascribing any Divine attribute or name to any but the one God, or even to himself in any other view; to hear him, in the very house sacred to the honor of the one God, against the profaning of which he himself had shown the greatest zeal, not only receiving Divine praise from his attendants, but receiving it in the very words of the sacred hymns which we used to sing in our most solemn assemblies to the praise of the Most High; yet vindicating this praise as his due, by quoting those very hymns in support of it, and rebuking my zealous friends who complained of this as an abuse.

"Let any one put himself in our place, and try how he could have borne all this, joined with many other provoking circumstances of the like nature; or if anything less could have satisfied him, than to have seen matters brought to the extremities to which all parties among us at last agreed to push them.

"I must own, indeed, that there was a peculiar energy in the rebukes of Jesus, which made it very difficult for one to resist the force of them. But what alarmed me most was, his performing many works that could not be done by human power; yea, such power appeared in them that I could not help suspecting, upon occasions, that the finger of God was there, notwithstanding all the pains that were taken to account for them otherwise. However, as his conduct, on the whole, seemed to me to be so very opposite to the univer-

sally received principles of reason and religion, I made the best shift I could to efface any impressions made on my heart from that quarter, concluding, that as the character of God himself must be measured by those principles, it would be absurd to suppose that any revelation coming from him could ever serve to undermine them.

"By the same principles, I fortified myself against the prediction delivered by Jesus concerning his rising again from the dead; to which event he had openly appealed for proof of his doctrine; or, which is the same thing, the excellency of his person and character; and what served to give me the greater assurance was, I found my favorite party was very forward to refer the decision of the whole controversy to that same event, as being very confident that it would never happen.

"When once Jesus was dead and buried, I thought the dispute as good as ended. But how great was my astonishment! when not long after, those poor illiterate men, who had been the companions of Jesus, appeared publicly, testifying with uncommon boldness that he had risen again from the dead, according to his prediction; that they were well assured of this by many infallible tokens, and that at last they saw him ascend into heaven; when I saw that no threatenings, no infamy, no punishment, could intimidate them; when, moreover, I observed so many undeniable proofs of supernatural power, co-operating with them, and exerted in the name of Jesus, as risen from the dead. Then the late wonderful works of Jesus, before his death, recurred upon my thoughts. The former impressions I had been at so much pains to stifle, revived fresh upon me. In short, the evidence crowded so fast upon me, from every quarter, I found there was no gainsaying it.

"But still I was averse to the last degree to admit it. I was shocked at the train of consequences which behoved to follow. And thus I questioned with myself; Has reason itself deceived me! Do all our best books of divinity and morality proceed upon false principles? Must I give up with all my choicest sentiments? Is there no such thing as wisdom or

righteousness in the world? Are all the world fools, and enemies to God, but these rude Galileans? The reflection is confounding! But what do these men propose? what do they aim at by their alarming the public in this manner with their testimony about the resurrection of Jesus? They can have no good design, no benevolent intention toward men. They seem rather to be influenced by a most malignant disposition. They certainly intend to bring this man's blood upon us, to prove us all to be enemies to God and objects of his wrath. They intend to make us desperate and utterly miserable.

"With such reflections, whatever inward disquiet I should undergo, I resolved to combat whatever evidence they could produce; till one day that I heard them charged, by some of my friends in authority, with the malevolent purpose I have just now mentioned. But such was their reply, that I think I shall never forget it! They indeed not only allowed, but demonstrated all the consequences I was so averse to admit, with such force and evidence as quite defeated all my resolution. But then they, at the same time, laid open such a treasure of Divine good will toward men; they drew such a character of God, no less amiable than awful; they laid such a solid foundation of everlasting consolation and good hope, for the most desperate and miserable wretch, as did infinitely more than counterbalance the loss of all my favorite principles, all my fond reasonings, and every worldly advantage I had connected with them. And all this they showed, with the greatest simplicity and clearness, to be the plain meaning and import of the fact which they testified, even the resurrection of Jesus. And they confirmed every thing they said, by the unanimous voice of the prophets, whom I had never understood till now. Their doctrine in respect of authority, resembled the word of a king, against whom there is no rising up, and in respect of evidence the light of the sun; or, to use a far more adequate similitude, it resembled the fact which they testified, and whereof it was the meaning. And it well corresponded thereto in its effects, for it proved sufficient to raise the dead, and give hope to the desperate. The fact and its import, the

hand-writing and *interpretation*, equally became the majesty of him who is the *Supreme*.

"I saw plainly, that in the resurrection of Jesus, there behoved to be the agency of a *power* superior to the power of nature, even capable to control and reverse the course thereof; therefore I concluded, that this operating *power* was greater than the God of the Sadducees and the philosophers. I found also, that this *power* had a *peculiar character*, manifest from the nature of the controversy, wherein it interposed its agency and gave decision. I found by the decision, that its character was more grand and perfect, as well as its agency stronger, than that of the God of the Pharisees. As to its agency, it was able to raise from deeper misery to higher blessedness than the Pharisees thought of. As to its character, it appeared with unlimited sovereignty *just* and *merciful* in perfection. Whereas the God of the Pharisees was such only partially, and by halves, incapable to execute the threatened curse against every sin, and yet show mercy and boundless favor to the transgressors; not so just as to maintain the honor, the spirit, and extent of the perfect law, at all events, nor so merciful as to have any favor for the utterly worthless and wretched, but halving the matter, merciful to men of good repute, and just in accepting those who are deficient in their righteousness, or, in another view, just in exacting the debt of five hundred pence, and merciful in forgiving that of fifty; or showing justice only against the utterly insolvent, and mercy only to those who can make partial payment; in short, (like all created potentates,) incapable of appearing at once without limitation of either attribute, just and merciful in perfection.

"I found then that the *power* which operated in the resurrection of Jesus, excelled not only in strength but also in majesty and perfection of character, all that was called God among men. So I perceived no small propriety in the saying of Jesus, *O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.* I concluded then that this *power* is the only true God, for that which is *greatest* must be *God.* Thus am I called off from

every idol, however highly dignified, whether the work of men's hands or of their imaginations, to adore him who is *higher than the highest.*

"I frankly acknowledge, then, that my religion, or my hope toward God, is *not founded on argument*, not on the wisdom of men, but on the *power of God;* not on any deductions from any principles I had hitherto known, but on *authority* interposed in a manner quite unexpected, baffling, confounding, and repelling all my reasonings; and if I may be allowed the expression, *forcing* upon me a new set of principles, by the most convincing and satisfactory as well as irresistible evidence; not on any reasonings *a priori*, but on a plain matter of fact established by impregnable evidence; not on any effort exerted, or any motion felt on my breast, but on that motion of Divine power, which burst the bands of death when Jesus rose; not on any operation which men call *mystical*, to avoid saying *unintelligible*, but on the simplest and most striking operation of power that can affect the human mind, even the presenting alive again a man who was dead; not on feeling any change on my heart to the better, or the remotest good inclination of my will, but on that fact which, sore against my will, forced upon me the shocking view of my guilt, and proved me to be an enemy to heaven, in that respect wherein I thought to have approved and valued myself to my last hour; not on a work of power assisting me to feel, will, or do anything, in order to peace with God, but on a work of power, proving to demonstration that every thing needful thereto is already completely finished; to say all in one word, not on any difference betwixt me and others, or any token for good about me whatever, but on the token or proof of Divine good will, expressed, in the resurrection of Jesus, towards sinners of all nations, without regard to any difference by which one man can distinguish himself from another.

"This fact, firm as a rock, emboldens me to pay an equal regard to philosophical guesses and to enthusiastical fancies. If any one, then, should ask me a reason of the hope that is in me, I have only one word to say, *The resurrection of Jesus.*

Take away this from me, and I am miserable indeed. Let this stand true, and nothing shall ever make me despair.

"This fact and its import, or the character of God thence arising, mutually confirm and ascertain each other. This character could never have been drawn to our view but from some Divine work. No work but this could ever evince such a character; and if this work was done, of necessity there must be such a character. This fact and its import, then, must stand or fall together. But more particularly,

"As this Divine character can nowhere be published but along with the fact, I am assured, by hearing the *grandest character* thence arising, that the fact must be true. For to suppose that the bare notion or idea of aught greater than God could ever be anywhere imagined, would be the wildest of all absurdities. And it is very evident, that the view of God, which the lower it abases the pride of man, raises his comfort and joy the higher; which reduces man to the most unreserved or to *extreme* dependance, while it exalts him to the *summit* of all happiness, could never be the contrivance of man, whose strongest impulse is toward the gratifying of his pride, and whose joy naturally rises or sinks according to the success thereof. Therefore, when the fact and its import are conveyed to my knowledge by the same testimony, I have no room to doubt that God, who alone can describe his own character, is the testifier and declarer of both. And surely it would be extremely absurd to suppose, that such a Divine character could arise from a contrived lie.

"Again, It is from this fact that the amiable character of the just God and the Saviour rises to my view. I could never have known that there was such a God, had I not known this fact. But I know, that this fact being true, there must be such a God; because it is impossible to account for it otherwise. Yea, every attempt to account for it otherwise, not only extinguishes all my former lights, but, without furnishing me with any new ones, lands me in atheism, in chaos and utter darkness. Whereas the account of it given by the witnesses, while it proves all my former wisdom to be foolishness, opens to me a new, and more delightful source of

knowledge, throwing light upon a thousand facts that I could never account for before; showing me a no less wonderful than satisfactory propriety, in all the extraordinary circumstances attending the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the ministry of his witnesses.—It throws light upon all the ancient sacred writings, and the extraordinary facts recorded in them from the creation downward. It sets my mind at rest, as to all the difficulties about the Divine character, and the condition of man, which occasionally pinched me before.—I am now reconciled to the entrance of sin and death into the world, and the whole dark side of things, on account of the marvellous light that shines forth from the greatest darkness.—I am now reconciled to the shade, on account of the magnificent picture thence arising to my view, and which could not otherwise have appeared. In a word, I thence perceive a no less amiable than grand uniformity of design, in all the works of God, from first to last. Whereas, should I shut my eyes against the light issuing thence, I am immediately lost in an unfathomable abyss of absurdities.

"I know then, assuredly, when I hear these illiterate men, attended by supernatural power; bearing witness to the fact; declaring the import of it, and speaking (*τα μεγαλεια τϑ Θεϑ*) the grand things of God, I hear God himself speaking; I hear the voice and testimony of God. Divine wisdom and Divine power, which are indeed inseparable, present themselves to my conscience at once: my pride is abashed; my reasonings are silenced, and hope arises to me from a new and unexpected source?

"Were such a majestic personage as is described by John, in the tenth chapter of the Apocalypse, to appear publicly to our view, would not all our former ideas of human grandeur evanish at his presence? Have the wise men, of almost every succeeding age, exploded the principles maintained by their predecessors both in ethics and physics? and should it seem a thing incredible to us, that when God, no longer winking at the times of ignorance, was to commence a public speaker and writer to men, he should explode the wisdom of all the teachers who formerly taught mankind? And if we

willingly hear wise men tracing to us, the order and connection of facts and appearances in the course of nature, why should we not hear God explaining to us supernatural facts? This seems to be a province proper for the author and controller of nature. It was surely far above the fishers of Galilee.

"I am fully satisfied, then, in agreement with the witnesses, to hold the meaning they have given of the resurrection of Jesus, for the *gospel*, the *word*, and the *testimony* of God; and to call it, by way of eminence, THE TRUTH, in opposition to every false gloss on the Scriptures, and every false reasoning about the light or law of nature, or about any of the works or ways of God. This truth opens for me a plain path, and affords me firm ground for every step; so that I have no occasion to grope among *probabilities* with the academics, or no less uncertain *feelings* with the devotees;—no reason to envy the former the pleasure they propose in their humble, candid, and sincere inquiries after—a phantom, which has hitherto eluded their grasp; or the latter, the more refined delight they propose in their pious wrestlings and waitings for—a good conceit of themselves;—no reason to be scared by the scornful sneer of those, or the more solemn frown of these. Let this truth be my companion, and I will not be ashamed in the presence of all the sons of Socrates, though joined with those of Gamaliel.

"In company with this truth, I dare act the part proper to man. I dare give free scope to my conscience, before God, and look into his perfect law, as knowing, that, however heavy the charge turn out against me, the resurrection of Jesus affords the answer of a good conscience toward God, as it shows a righteousness to be already finished, by which God can appear just in justifying me, even in the very worst view I can have of myself, or which is more, even in the very worst view I can appear in before him, who knows all things. By being thus encouraged to look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein, I see the extent of it to be vastly wider than I was hitherto willing to notice. And,

by seeing what a righteousness was requisite to honor it, and at what an expense every the least transgression of it behoved to be expiated, I am led to behold every precept of it more sacred than ever I did before. I know that I cannot disregard any precept of it, without, at the same time, disregarding the revealed righteousness. I consider the perfect law, the law that requires godliness and humanity in perfection, as the sacred and invariable rule of correspondence with God. And though on this side the grave I cannot come before God at any time, and say, *I have no sin*, yet the TRUTH both binds and encourages me to aim at no less than perfection.

"While I keep the perfect law in my view, which, like a faithful mirror, discovers all my deformity, I can find no reason to glory over the most infamous of mankind. The nearer I come to the light, which makes *manifest all things that are reproved*, I have the more reason to say, *Behold, I am vile.* I can have no room for glorying then but in the bare TRUTH; and I have good reason confidently to oppose the righteousness revealed there, to all that is admired in its stead among men.

"I now see plainly, that all my former reasonings against Jesus and his character, were, at the same time, pointed against the divine law, and against the natural dictates of my own conscience. I chose to confine the exercise of my conscience to what might distinguish me from others. I took pleasure in reflecting *what I was not*, in comparison with others; but was averse to notice *what I was* before God. When any uneasy question, in this last respect, arose in my heart, I was careful to turn it aside by more agreeable reasonings. If I might, for *once*, call that which properly distinguishes man from other animals, viz. his conscience, by the name of REASON, I would vary the style of the received maxim, and say, *Reason pursued* is despair, and *faith*, or the knowledge of truth, is the cure of despair. Before I knew the cure, I found nothing but pain and misery, in listening to the simple dictates of my conscience.

And, sure I am, neither conscience nor argument directed me to the cure. But it came to me, unexpectedly from heaven, by supernatural revelation; that is, when I heard God, by the mouths of the witnesses, laying open the meaning of a supernatural fact; a fact that had not only awakened fresh disturbance in my conscience, but also demolished all my arguments.

"I was convinced then, that the revealed truth, which not only awakened my conscience, and made me sensible of my malady, but also brought such relief as was sufficient to satisfy it when most awakened, behoved to come from the same God who formed it, and whose law is naturally impressed there. I found I had hitherto neglected and resisted the natural notices of the true God there, and framed to myself another god by reasonings!—that I had been all along as one half asleep or intoxicated; and who chooses to be so, as not finding his circumstances in so good order as to give him pleasure and satisfaction in his soberest and coolest moments. And, indeed, who would incline to give place to such apprehensions of God and of himself, as could yield no pleasure nor satisfaction; but, on the contrary, the greatest of all pains; yea, behoved, without the knowledge of the cure, to fill his mind with the most repining hatred of God?

"I have great reason then to value the gospel, as it enables me to reflect, without pain, that I am a human creature; as it presents me with such an amiable view of the inflexibly just God, as that I may think of him when fully awake, and need not court the momentary quiet, or rather insensibility, which is procured by resisting the natural notices of God in the conscience, or the more explicit declaration of his will in his written law. The gospel, while it enforces the law of God, and makes the conscience more sensible to the conviction of sin, conveys likewise the most refreshing remedy; so answers to the majesty of the living and true God, who says, *See now that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me: I kill and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver*

*out of my hand; for I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever.**

"Nor do I think I have any apology to make to men, for renouncing my former *ways* and *thoughts*, however righteous they appear to myself and others, upon my being found guilty, beyond reply, by the "one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy;" and demonstrated to be *wicked* and *unrighteous* in respect of both, by his irresistible work and testimony. I do not think it beneath the dignity of the wisest human creature, to be convinced of his mistake, by him, whom it well becomes to say, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."†

"I used to admire it as a fine imagination, that were truth and virtue to be presented before our eyes in all their native charms, the beauteous splendor would be too transporting, too dazzling to be beheld by us, but through some vail. The experiment has been tried, and that in a manner far surpassing the reach of fancy. The unsullied perfection of both has appeared in the world, in all their native charms indeed, yet so as not to hurt the weakest eye. But what was the result? We saw no form nor comeliness in him; no beauty that we should desire him. We turned aside our faces from him as from a disagreeable object. The most wise and virtuous among us were the foremost to set him at nought.—Yet however strange it may seem, true it is, that some of the most base and stupid among us were, upon this occasion, struck with such an apprehension of divine beauty, as far exceeds all the raptures of imagination. "The WORD was made flesh," said they, "and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

"I have said the resurrection of Jesus serves me, as a new principle of knowledge or reasoning. I do not set out

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* Deut. xxxii. 39, 40.

† See Isaiah lv. 7—9.

from conjectures, to inquire after truth: but I set out with the light of undoubted truth, to observe what path it opens for me to walk in. I do not set out from human maxims or presumptions, to inquire how I shall form a god to myself; but I set out from heavenly truth, stamped with the Divine character, to inquire how I shall form my heart and life suitably to it. I do not set out upon the inquiry, What I shall do to placate the Divine Majesty? or, as the phrase is, How I shall make up my peace with God? but I set out from the persuasion, that God is just in justifying the ungodly, to inquire what service he has for me—to prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

"All my religious principles and practices are so many inferences from the aforementioned fact; yet I have no ground to value myself, as a *reasoner*, even on this new footing. For I could find no satisfactory meaning at all in that fact, till I was first taught it by the illiterate Galileans. And, what is more, I can deduce no inference from thence, till I be first taught it by one or other of the inspired witnesses. But when I hear them displaying the manifold wisdom of God from that source, I perceive a wonderful propriety and force in the whole of their reasoning. Thus God sees meet to abase my pride of understanding, by the very means he uses for conveying to me the most useful and comfortable of all knowledge. And herein, I am persuaded, he consults my real benefit. For were I left to indulge my natural itch for reasoning, even on this new footing, I am sensible I should soon act the same part with this supernatural revelation, as I formerly did with the light of nature. When I reflect where all my own wisdom and that of the greatest sages landed me; and that, in the height of my wisdom, I turned out the greatest fool; I am now fully satisfied, that my safest and wisest course is, simply to believe just as I am told, and submissively to do just as I am bidden, without murmuring or disputing. However foolish then my rule of faith and practice may appear in the eyes of the WISE, and however weak in the eyes of the DEVOUT, I find myself kept in counte-

nance by the apostolic maxim, 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.'"

[Note H.]

It is surprising that this adoption of the Phenician language by the patriarchs should have escaped the notice of several intelligent readers of the Bible. Jacob and Laban, it is clear, by the names they gave to the cairn, or memorial of stones, spoke two different dialects, and it is nearly equally evident, that the language of Laban was the dialect of Ur of the Chaldees, the original speech of the Hebrew race. As the patriarchs disused the true Hebrew dialect, it is manifest that they had conformed to the speech of Canaan; and that this conformity was complete, is proved by the identity between all the remains of Canaanitish names, and that Phenician tongue in which the Scriptures, prior to the captivity, are written; with the exception of the book of Job, which appears to be the original Arabic of Job and his friends, "transdialected," and amplified by Moses. At the same time, it must be remarked, that the Phenician and the Chaldean were merely different dialects of the same primitive language which had been spoken by the first ancestors of mankind.

[Note I.]

The commentators, by their mistakes, have involved the account which Moses gives of the paradise in which our first parents were placed, in endless confusion. Their mistakes are double. They fail to distinguish between the garden itself and Eden, the large and wide region in which it was situated. They trace the course of the rivers in an opposite direction to that which Moses takes in describing them. Not startled at the absurdity of making the Tigris and the Euphra-

tes (rivers which rise considerably upwards of a hundred miles from each other) flow for a time in a united stream, they trace the rivers downwards. Moses, on the contrary, is tracing them upwards, following the usual course of traders from Arabia, to whose account he doubtless refers, when he enumerates the commodities which the different countries he mentioned, furnished. "This hypothesis," observes Professor Murray, "which indeed is supported by all the facts, gives a different, but not a less natural meaning to the word *rasim*, and obliges us to translate it not fountains, but principal streams." The first system of these principal streams which flow into the Euphrates nearest to its mouth, retained long in one of its branches, the ancient name of Pison, in the classical appellation of the Pasi-tigris. A second, and higher system of branched streams, takes a circuit through the land of ancient Media, and part of the region it waters still preserves the name of Cush, (which translators have rendered Ethiopia,) in its modern denomination, Chuzistan. The Tigris and the Euphrates admit of no dispute.

The garden itself, if it perished not before, must have been swept away by the deluge, but the region of Eden was well known to the Israelites as the country bordering upon the lower Euphrates.

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